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Calvin

THE NECESSITY
OF
REFORMING THE CHURCH:

PRESENTED TO THE
IMPERIAL DIET AT SPIRES, A.D. 1544.

TO WHICH IS ADDED
A PATERNAL ADMONITION BY POPE PAUL III. TO
THE EMPEROR CHARLES V.,

AND
REMARKS ON THE PATERNAL ADMONITION
By JOHN CALVIN.

WRITTEN IN LATIN, AND NOW FIRST TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH
By H. BEVERIDGE, Esq., ADVOCATE.

Quæ enim vel prior, vel auctoritate dignior Ecclesiæ antiquitas quàm
sub Apostolis?—CALVIN.

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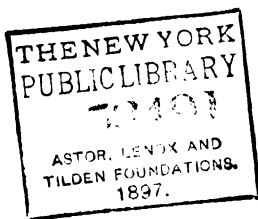
1844.

MCM.

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Calvin



"Fuerunt tum Spiræ coacta Imperii Comitia: qua accepta occasione, Calvinus libellum edidit de Necessitate Reformandæ Ecclesiæ, quo haud satis scio an aut nervosius, aut gravius ejus argumenti scriptum nostro seculo editum fuerit."—BEZA, J. CALVINI VITA.

"An Imperial Diet was then assembled at Spire; and Calvin, availing himself of the opportunity, published a short Treatise on the Necessity of Reforming the Church. I know not that any thing on the subject, either more nervous or more solid, has appeared in our age!"

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WM. S. MARTIN.**

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S. DOUGLAS WYETH.**

PREFACE.

It cannot be necessary to apologise for the publication of any work of CALVIN of which no English translation has previously appeared. Admiration has often been expressed, that one who wrote so much, always wrote so well; and the Treatise which forms the principal part of the present volume will not be found unworthy of its Author's fame. It well deserves the praise which BEZA bestowed upon it, when he doubted whether, on the subject of which it treats, any thing more nervous or solid had been published in his day. That day, though among the earliest, was perhaps the brightest which Protestant-

PREFACE.

ism has yet seen; and the writings of the distinguished theologians who then flourished, and in particular of Calvin, by common consent the most distinguished of them all, are the armoury from which weapons, offensive and defensive, must be drawn to fight the battle of Protestantism, whether assailed from without by its avowed enemies of the Papacy, or from within by those who, though its sworn defenders, have treacherously lifted the heel against it.

It is now within a year of *three centuries* since this work of Calvin, on "The necessity of Reforming the Church," was written, and yet, with reference both to its subject and its contents, it looks as if it had been intended for the present day. The corruptions which it so powerfully assails not only exist in full vigour within the Romish church, but are busily at work undermining and threatening speedy overthrow to what,

in better times, was wont to be regarded as one of the strongest bulwarks of the Reformation. While it is melancholy to think that three centuries have thus passed away without adding to the religious wisdom of the world, there is some consolation, both in the fact, that in the writings of the first Reformers we possess an antidote for every form which Popish error can assume; and also in the hope, that the glorious results which followed their first publication will again be realized, if care is taken, by republishing, to have them generally diffused. Happily the public mind is already turning in this direction, and with a view to the demand thus created, the present humble volume has been prepared. Humble as it is, it is not saying too much of it to affirm, that no one who masters its contents will be unarmed against the prevailing errors of the time.

To the treatise on "The Necessity

1*

of Reforming the Church" has been added, a "Letter by the Pope to the Emperor Charles V.," with "Calvin's Remarks."

The Letter, which does not appear to have been previously translated into English, is curious and valuable. Calvin describes it as a "treasure," and his "Remarks," though perhaps harsher than could be wished, are full of learning and solid argument, and effectually demolish the arrogant pretensions of the Romish see. That their pungency was not altogether thrown away, appears from the fact, that Pallavicini, in his history of the council of Trent, while describing them as a compound of fire and brimstone, deems it necessary to warn Roman Catholics against the speciousness of an argument contained in them.

The Pope, assuming the character of a father, applies the lash to the Empe-

ror, for presuming to interfere with the Papal supremacy, but every now and then, when he imagines the Emperor is wincing under it, reminds him that he must whip, if he would not expose himself to the judgment which befel Eli for not chastising his sons!

Calvin makes a happy and most cutting use of the reference, by applying it to the vices, not of imaginary, but of actual sons, reminding the Pope of the villanies committed under his eye, and in many instances with his express sanction, by his acknowledged son, Pierre-Luigi, and other members of his family. Pallavicini's mode of meeting the remark is not very complimentary to his Holiness. He admits the fact, but argues in effect, that if the Pope and other rulers were not permitted to chastise in others the vices of which they are privately guilty, all crimes might go unpunished. Will any man,

he asks, maintain, that after David fell, all his subjects were entitled with impunity to imitate his guilt?

JULY, 1843.

TO THE
MOST INVINCIBLE EMPEROR CHARLES V.,
AND THE
MOST ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCES AND OTHER ORDERS,
NOW HOLDING A DIET OF THE EMPIRE AT SPIRES,
A HUMBLE EXHORTATION,
SERIOUSLY TO UNDERTAKE THE TASK OF RESTORING THE CHURCH.

Presented in the name of all those who wish Christ to reign.

AUGUST EMPEROR,—You have summoned this Diet, that, in concert with the Most Illustrious Princes and other Orders of the Empire, you may at length deliberate and decide upon the means of ameliorating the present condition of the Church, which we all see to be very miserable, and almost desperate. Now, therefore, while you are seated at this consultation, I humbly beg and implore, first of your Imperial Majesty, and at the same time of you also, Most Illustrious Princes and distinguished Personages, that you will not decline to read, and diligently ponder, what I have to lay before you. The magnitude and weightiness of the cause may well excite in you an eagerness to hear, and I will set the matter so plainly in your view, that you can

have no difficulty in determining what course to adopt. Whoever I am, I here profess to plead in defence, both of sound doctrine and of the Church. In this character, I seem at all events entitled to expect that you will not deny me audience, until such time as it may appear whether I falsely usurp the character, or whether I faithfully perform its duties, and make good what I profess. But though I feel that I am by no means equal to so great a task, I am not at all afraid, that after you have heard the nature of my office, I shall be accused either of folly or presumption in having ventured thus to appear before you. There are two circumstances by which men are wont to recommend, or certainly to justify, their conduct. If a thing is done honestly, and from pious zeal, we deem it worthy of praise; if it is done under the pressure of public necessity, we at least deem it not unworthy of excuse. Since both of these apply here, I am confident, from your equity, that I shall easily obtain your approval of my design. For where can I exert myself to better purpose or more honestly, where, too, in a matter at this time more necessary, than in attempting, according to my ability, to aid the Church of Christ, whose claims it is unlawful in any instance to deny, and which is now in grievous distress, and in extreme danger? But there is no occasion for a long preface concerning myself. Receive what I say as you would do if it were pronounced by the united voice of all those who either have

already taken care to restore the Church, or are desirous that it should be restored to true order. In this situation are several Princes, of not the humblest class, and not a few distinguished communities. For all of these I, an individual, so speak that it is more truly they who at once, and with one mouth, speak through me. To these add the countless multitude of pious men, who, scattered over the various regions of the Christian world, still unanimously concur with me in this pleading. In short, regard this as the common address of all who so earnestly deplore the present corruption of the Church, that they are unable to bear it longer, and are determined not to rest till they see some amendment. I am aware of the odious names with which we are branded; but, meanwhile, whatever be the name by which it is thought proper to designate us, hear our cause, and, after you have heard, judge what the place is which we are entitled to hold.

First, then, the question is not, Whether the Church labours under diseases both numerous and grievous, (this is admitted even by all moderate judges,) but whether the diseases are of a kind the cure of which admits not of longer delay, and as to which, therefore, it is neither useful nor becoming to await the result of slow remedies. We are accused of rash and impious innovation, for having ventured to propose any change at all on the former state of the Church. What! Even if it has not been done either without

cause or imperfectly? I hear there are persons who, even in this case, do not hesitate to condemn us; their opinion being, that we were indeed right in desiring amendment, but not right in attempting it. From such persons, all I would ask at present is, that they will for a little suspend their judgment until I shall have shown from fact that we have not been prematurely hasty—have not attempted any thing rashly, any thing alien from our duty; have, in fine, done nothing until compelled by the highest necessity. To enable me to prove this, it is necessary to attend to the matters in dispute.

We maintain, then, that at the commencement, when God raised up Luther and others, who held forth a torch to light us into the way of salvation, and who, by their ministry, founded and reared our churches, those heads of doctrine in which the truth of our religion, those in which the pure and legitimate worship of God, and those in which the salvation of men are comprehended, were in a great measure obsolete. We maintain that the use of the sacraments was in many ways vitiated and polluted. And we maintain that the government of the Church was converted into a species of foul and insufferable tyranny. But, perhaps, these averments have not force enough to move certain individuals until they are better explained. This, therefore, I will do, not as the subject demands, but as far as my ability will permit. Here, however, I have no intention to review and dis-

cuss all our controversies ; that would require a long discourse, and this is not the place for it. I wish only to show how just and necessary are the causes which forced upon us the changes for which we are blamed. To accomplish this, I must take up together the three following points.

FIRST, I must briefly enumerate the evils which compelled us to seek for remedies.

SECONDLY, I must show that the particular remedies which our Reformers employed were apt and salutary.

THIRDLY, I must make it plain that we were not at liberty any longer to delay putting forth our hand, seeing that the matter demanded instant amendment.

The first point, as I merely advert to it for the purpose of clearing my way to the other two, I will endeavour to dispose of in a few words, but in wiping off the heavy charge of sacrilegious audacity and sedition, founded on the allegation, that we have improperly, and with intemperate haste, usurped an office which did not belong to us, I will dwell at greater length.

If it be inquired then by what things chiefly the Christian religion has a standing existence amongst us, and maintains its truth, it will be found that the following two not only occupy the principal place, but comprehend under them all the other parts, and consequently the whole substance of Christianity, viz., a knowledge, *first*, of the mode in which God is duly worshipped ; and, *secondly*, of

the source from which salvation is to be obtained. When these are kept out of view, though we may glory in the name of Christians, our profession is empty and vain. After these come the Sacraments and the Government of the Church, which, as they were instituted for the preservation of these branches of doctrine, ought not to be employed for any other purpose; and, indeed, the only means of ascertaining whether they are administered purely and in due form, or otherwise, is to bring them to this test. If any one is desirous of a clearer and more familiar illustration, I would say, that regimen in the Church, the pastoral office, and all other matters of order, resemble the body, whereas the doctrine which regulates the due worship of God, and points out the ground on which the consciences of men must rest their hope of salvation, is the soul which animates the body, renders it lively and active, and, in short, makes it not to be a dead and useless carcase.

As to what I have yet said, there is no controversy among the pious, or among men of right and sane mind.

Let us now see what is meant by the due worship of God. Its chief foundation is to acknowledge Him to be, as He is, the only source of all virtue, justice, holiness, wisdom, truth, power, goodness, mercy, life, and salvation; in accordance with this, to ascribe and render to Him the glory of all that is good, to seek all things in Him alone, and

in every want have recourse to Him alone. Hence arises prayer, hence praise and thanksgiving—these being attestations to the glory which we attribute to Him. This is that genuine sanctification of His name which He requires of us above all things. To this is united adoration, by which we manifest for Him the reverence due to his greatness and excellency, and to this ceremonies are subservient as adminicles or instruments, in order that, in the performance of divine worship, the body may be exercised at the same time with the soul. Next after these comes self-abasement, when renouncing the world and the flesh, we are transformed in the renewing of our mind, and living no longer to ourselves, submit to be ruled and actuated by Him. By this abasement we are trained to obedience and devotedness to his will, so that his fear reigns in our hearts, and regulates all the actions of our life. That in these things consists the true and sincere worship which alone God approves, and in which alone He delights, is both taught by the Holy Spirit throughout the Scriptures, and is also, antecedent to discussion, the obvious dictate of piety. Nor from the beginning was there any other method of worshipping God, the only difference being, that this spiritual truth, which with us is naked and simple, was under the former dispensation wrapt up in figures. And this is the meaning of our Saviour's words, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship

the Father in spirit and in truth.” (John iv. 23.) For by these words he meant not to declare that God was not worshipped by the fathers in this spiritual manner, but only to point out a distinction in the external form, viz., That while they had the Spirit shadowed forth by many figures, we have it in simplicity. But it has always been an acknowledged point, that God, who is a Spirit, must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

Moreover, the rule which distinguishes between pure and vitiated worship, is of universal application, in order that we may not adopt any device which seems fit to ourselves, but look to the injunctions of Him who alone is entitled to prescribe. Therefore, if we would have Him to approve our worship, this rule, which he every where enforces with the utmost strictness, must be carefully observed. For there is a two-fold reason why the Lord, in condemning and prohibiting all fictitious worship, requires us to give obedience only to his own voice. First, it tends greatly to establish His authority that we do not follow our own pleasure, but depend entirely on his sovereignty; and, secondly, such is our folly, that when we are left at liberty, all we are able to do is to go astray. And then when once we have turned aside from the right path, there is no end to our wanderings, until we get buried under a multitude of superstitions. Justly, therefore, does the Lord, in order to assert his full right of dominion, strictly enjoin what he wishes us to

do, and at once reject all human devices which are at variance with his command. Justly, too, does he, in express terms, define our limits, that we may not by fabricating perverse modes of worship, provoke His anger against us. I know how difficult it is to persuade the world that God disapproves of all modes of worship not expressly sanctioned by His Word. The opposite persuasion which cleaves to them, being seated, as it were, in their very bones and marrow, is, that whatever they do, has in itself, a sufficient sanction, provided it exhibits some kind of zeal for the honour of God. But since God not only regards as fruitless, but also plainly abominates, whatever we undertake from zeal to His worship, if at variance with His command, what do we gain by a contrary course? The words of God are clear and distinct, "Obedience is better than sacrifice." "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (1. Sam. xv. 22; Matt. xv. 9.) Every addition to His word, especially in this matter, is a lie. Mere "will-worship" is vanity. This is the decision, and when once the judge has decided, it is no longer time to debate.

Will your Imperial Majesty now be pleased to recognize, and will you, Most Illustrious Princes, lend me your attention, while I show how utterly at variance with this view are all the observances, in which, throughout the Christian world in the present day, divine worship is made to consist? In word,

indeed, they concede to God the glory of all that is good, but, in reality, they rob him of the half, or more than the half, by partitioning his perfections among the saints. Let our adversaries use what evasions they may, and defame us for exaggerating what they pretend to be trivial errors, I will simply state the fact as every man perceives it. Divine offices are distributed among the saints as if they had been appointed colleagues to the Supreme God, and, in a multitude of instances, they are made to do his work, while He is kept out of view. The thing I complain of is just what every body confesses by a vulgar proverb. For what is meant by saying, "the Lord cannot be known for apostles," unless it be that, by the height to which apostles are raised, the dignity of Christ is sunk, or at least obscured? The consequence of this perversity is, that mankind, forsaking the fountain of living waters, have learned, as Jeremiah tells us, to hew them out "cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (Jer. ii. 13.) For where is it that they seek for salvation and every other good? Is it in God alone? The whole tenor of their lives openly proclaims the contrary. They say, indeed, that it is in Him, but it is mere pretence, seeing they seek them elsewhere.

Of this fact, we have clear proof in the corruptions by which prayer was first vitiated, and afterwards in a great measure perverted and extinguished. We have observed, that prayer affords a test whether or not suppli-

ants render due glory to God. In like manner, will it enable us to discover whether, after robbing Him of his glory, they transfer it to the creatures. In genuine prayer, something more is required than mere entreaty. The suppliant must feel assured that God is the only being to whom he ought to flee, both because He only can succour him in necessity; and also, because He has actually engaged to do it. But no man can have this conviction unless he pay regard both to the command by which God calls us to himself, and to the promise of listening to our prayers which is annexed to the command. But the command was not thus regarded when the generality of mankind invoked angels and dead men promiscuously with God, and the wiser part, if they did not invoke them instead of God, at least regarded them as mediators, at whose intercession God granted their requests. Where, then, was the promise which is founded entirely on the intercession of Christ? Passing by Christ, the only Mediator, each betook himself to the patron who had struck his fancy, or if at any time a place was given to Christ, it was one in which he remained unnoticed, like some ordinary individual in a crowd. Then, although nothing is more repugnant to the nature of genuine prayer than doubt and distrust, so much did these prevail, that they were almost regarded as necessary, in order to pray aright. And why was this? Just because the world understood not the force of the

expressions in which God invites us to pray to Him, engages to do whatsoever we ask in reliance on his command and promise, and sets forth Christ as the Advocate in and through whose name our prayers are heard. Besides, let the public prayers which are in common use in Churches be examined. It will be found that they are stained with numberless impurities. From them, therefore, we have it in our power to judge how much this part of divine worship was vitiated. Nor was there less corruption in the expressions of thanksgiving. To this fact, testimony is borne by the public hymns, in which the saints are lauded for every blessing, just as if they were the colleagues of God.

Then what shall I say of adoration? Do not men pay to images and statues the very same reverence which they pay to God? It is an error to suppose that there is any difference between their conduct in this respect, and the madness of the heathen. For God forbids us not only to worship images, but to regard them as the residence of his divinity, and worship it as residing in them. The very same pretexts which the patrons of this abomination employ in the present day, were formerly employed by the heathen to cloke their impiety. Besides, it is undeniable that saints, nay, their very bones, garments, shoes, and images, are adored even in the place of God. But some subtle disputant will interpose, and tell me that there are divers species of adoration,—that there is what they call

dulia, the honour given to saints, their images, and their bones; and *latria*, reserved for God as due to him only, unless we are to except *hyperdulia*, a species which, as the infatuation increased, was invented to set the blessed Virgin above the rest. As if these subtle distinctions were either known or present to the minds of those who prostrate themselves before images. Meanwhile, the world is full of idolatry not less gross, and if I may so speak, not less capable of being felt, than was the ancient idolatry of the Egyptians, which all the prophets every where so strongly reprobate.

I am merely glancing at each of these corruptions, because I will afterwards more clearly expose their demerits.

I come now to ceremonies, which ought to be grave attestations of divine worship, but had degenerated into mere mockery of God. A new Judaism, as a substitute for that which God had distinctly abrogated, has again been reared up by means of numerous puerile extravagances, collected from different quarters; and with these have been mixed up certain impious rites, partly borrowed from the heathen, and more adapted to some theatrical show than to the dignity of our religion. The first evil here is, that an immense number of ceremonies, which God had by his authority abrogated, once for all, have been again revived. The next evil is, that while ceremonies ought to be living exercises of piety, men are vainly occupied with numbers

of them that are both frivolous and useless. But by far the most deadly evil of all is, that after men have thus mocked God with ceremonies of one kind or other, they think they have fulfilled their duty as admirably as if these ceremonies included in them the whole essence of piety and divine worship.

With regard to self-abasement, on which depends regeneration to newness of life, the whole doctrine was entirely obliterated from the minds of men, or, at all events, half buried, in as much as it was known to few, and to them but slenderly. But the spiritual sacrifice which the Lord in an especial manner recommends, is to mortify the old, and be transformed into a new man. It may be, perhaps, that preachers stammer out something about these words, but that they have no idea of the things meant by them is apparent even from this,—that they strenuously oppose us in our attempt to restore this branch of doctrine. If at any time they discourse on repentance, they only glance, as if in contempt, at the points of principal moment, and dwell entirely on certain external exercises of the body, which, as Paul assures us, are certainly not of the highest utility, (Col. ii. 23; 1 Tim. iv. 8.) What makes this perverseness the more intolerable is, that the generality, under a pernicious error, pursue the shadow for the substance, and, overlooking true repentance, devote their whole attention to abstinences, vigils, and other things, which Paul terms “beggarly elements” of the world.

Having observed that the word of God is the test which discriminates between his true worship and that which is false and vitiated, we thence readily infer that the whole form of divine worship in general use in the present day is nothing but mere corruption. For men pay no regard to what God has commanded, or to what he approves, in order that they may serve him in a becoming manner; but assume to themselves a license of devising modes of worship at will, and afterwards obtruding them upon him as a substitute for obedience. If in what I say I seem to exceed bounds, let an examination be made of all the acts by which the generality suppose that they worship God. I dare scarcely except a tenth part as not the random offspring of their own brain. What more would we? God rejects, condemns, abominates all fictitious worship, and employs his word as a bridle to keep us in unqualified obedience. When shaking off this yoke, we wander after our own fictions, and offer to him a worship, the work of human rashness; how much soever it may delight ourselves, in his sight it is vain trifling, nay, vileness and pollution. The advocates of human traditions paint them in fair and gaudy colours; and Paul certainly admits that they carry with them a show of wisdom; but as God values obedience more than all sacrifices, it ought to be sufficient for the rejection of any mode of worship, that it wants the sanction of a divine command.

We come now to what we have set down

as the second principal branch of Christian doctrine, viz., knowledge of the source from which salvation is to be obtained. Now, the knowledge of our salvation presents three different stages. First, we must begin with a sense of individual wretchedness, filling us with despondency as if we were spiritually dead. This effect is produced when the original and hereditary depravity of our nature is set before us as the source of all evil—a depravity which begets in us distrust, rebellion against God, pride, avarice, lust, and all kinds of evil concupiscence, and making us averse to all rectitude and justice, holds us captive under the yoke of sin; and when, moreover, each individual, on the disclosure of his own sins, feeling confounded at his turpitude, is forced to be dissatisfied with himself, and to account himself and all that he has of his own as less than nothing; then, on the other hand, conscience being cited to the bar of God, becomes sensible of the curse under which it lies, and as if it had received a warning of eternal death, learns to tremble at the divine anger. This, I say, is the first stage in the way to salvation, when the sinner, overwhelmed and prostrated, despairs of all carnal aid, yet does not harden himself against the justice of God, or become stupidly callous, but, trembling and anxious, groans in agony and sighs for relief. From this he should rise to the second stage. This he does when, animated by the knowledge of Christ, he again begins to breathe. For to one hum-

bled in the manner in which we have described, no other course remains but to turn to Christ, that through his interposition he may be delivered from misery. But the only man who thus seeks salvation in Christ is the man who is aware of the extent of his power; that is, acknowledges Him as the only Priest who reconciles us to the Father, and His death as the only sacrifice by which sin is expiated, the divine justice satisfied, and a true and perfect righteousness acquired; who, in fine, does not divide the work between himself and Christ, but acknowledges it to be by mere gratuitous favour that he is justified in the sight of God. From this stage also he must rise to the third, when instructed in the grace of Christ, and in the fruits of his death and resurrection, he rests in him with firm and solid confidence, feeling assured that Christ is so completely his own, that he possesses in him righteousness and life.

Now, see how sadly this doctrine has been perverted. On the subject of original sin, perplexing questions have been raised by the schoolmen, who have done what they could to explain away this fatal disease; for, in their discussions they reduce it to little more than excess of bodily appetite and lust. Of that blindness and vanity of intellect, whence unbelief and superstition proceed, of inward depravity of soul, of pride, ambition, stubbornness, and other secret sources of evil, they say not a word. And sermons are not a whit more sound. Then, as to the doctrine of free

will, as preached before Luther and the other Reformers, appeared, what effect could it have but to fill men with an overweening opinion of their own virtue, swelling them out with vanity, and leaving no room for the grace and assistance of the Holy Spirit? But why dwell on this? There is no point which is more keenly contested, none in which our adversaries are more inveterate in their opposition, than that of justification, namely, as to whether we obtain it by faith or by works. On no account will they allow us to give Christ the honour of being called our righteousness, unless their works come in at the same time for a share of the merit. The dispute is not, whether good works ought to be performed by the pious, and whether they are accepted by God and rewarded by him, but whether, by their own worth, they reconcile us to God; whether we acquire eternal life as their price; whether they are compensations which are made to the justice of God, so as to take away guilt; and whether they are to be confided in as a ground of salvation. We condemn the error, which enjoins men to have more respect to their own works than to Christ, as a means of rendering God propitious, of meriting His favour, and obtaining the inheritance of eternal life; in short, as a means of becoming righteous in his sight. First, they plume themselves on the merit of works, as if they laid God under obligation to them. But pride such as this, what is it but a fatal intoxication of

soul? For instead of Christ they adore themselves, and dream of possessing life while they are immersed in the profound abyss of death. It may be said that I am exaggerating on this head, but no man can deny the trite doctrine of the schools and churches to be, that it is by works we must merit the favour of God, and by works acquire eternal life—that any hope of salvation unpropped by good works is rash and presumptuous—that we are reconciled to God by the satisfaction of good works, and not by a gratuitous remission of sins—that good works are meritorious of eternal salvation, not because they are freely imputed for righteousness through the merits of Christ, but in terms of law; and that men, as often as they lose the grace of God, are reconciled to Him, not by a free pardon, but by what they term works of satisfaction, these works being supplemented by the merits of Christ and martyrs, provided only the sinner deserves to be so assisted. It is certain, that before Luther became known to the world, all men were fascinated by these impious dogmas, and even in the present day, there is no part of our doctrine which our opponents impugn with greater earnestness and obstinacy..

Lastly, there was another most pestilential error, which not only occupied the minds of men, but was regarded as one of the principal articles of faith, of which it was impious to doubt, viz., that believers ought to be perpetually in suspense and uncertainty as to

their interest in the divine favour. By this suggestion of the devil, the power of faith was completely extinguished, the benefits of Christ's purchase destroyed, and the salvation of men overthrown. For, as Paul declares, that faith only is Christian faith which inspires our hearts with confidence, and emboldens us to appear in the presence of God. (Rom. v. 2.) On no other view could his doctrine in another passage be maintained, viz., that "we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. viii. 15.)

But what is the effect of that hesitancy which our enemies require in their disciples, save to annihilate all confidence in the promises of God? Paul argues, that "If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect." (Rom. iv. 14.) Why so? Just because the law keeps a man in doubt, and does not permit him to entertain a sure and firm confidence. But they, on the other hand, dream of a faith, which, excluding and repelling man from that confidence which Paul requires, throws him back upon conjecture, to be tossed like a reed shaken by the wind. And is it not surprising that after they had once founded their hope of salvation on the merit of works, they plunged into all this absurdity? It could not but happen, that from such a precipice they should have such a fall. For what can man find in his works, but materials for doubt, and, finally,

for despair? We thus see how error led to error.

Here, mighty Emperor, and most Illustrious Princes, it will be necessary to recall to your remembrance what I formerly observed, viz., that the safety of the Church depends as much on this doctrine as human life does on the soul. If the purity of this doctrine is in any degree impaired, the Church has received a deadly wound; and, therefore, when I shall have shown that it was for the greater part extinguished, it will be the same as if I had shown that the Church had been brought to the very brink of destruction. As yet I have only alluded to this in passing, but by-and-by I will unfold it more clearly.

I come now to those things which I have likened to the body, viz., government and the dispensation of the sacraments, of which, when the doctrine is subverted, the power and utility are gone, although the external form should be faultless. What, then, if there was no soundness in them externally or internally? And it is not difficult to demonstrate that this was the fact. First, in regard to the sacraments, ceremonies devised by men were placed in the same rank with the mysteries instituted by Christ. For seven sacraments were received without any distinction, though Christ appointed two only; the others resting merely on human authority. Yet to them the grace of God was held to be annexed, just as much as if Christ had been present in them. Moreover, the two which Christ

instituted were fearfully corrupted. Baptism was so disguised by superfluous additions, that scarcely a vestige of pure and genuine baptism could be traced; while the Holy Supper was not only corrupted by extraneous observances, but its very form was altogether changed. What Christ commanded to be done, and in what order, is perfectly clear. But in contempt of his command, a theatrical exhibition was got up, and substituted for the Supper. For what resemblance is there between the Mass and the true Supper of our Lord? While the command of Christ enjoins believers to communicate with each other in the sacred symbols of his body and blood, the thing seen at Mass ought more properly to be termed excommunication. For the priest separates himself from the rest of the assembly, and devours apart that which ought to have been brought forward into the midst and distributed. Then, as if he were some successor of Aaron, he pretends that he offers a sacrifice to expiate the sins of the people. But where does Christ once mention sacrifice? He bids us take, eat, and drink. Who authorises men to convert *taking* into *offering*? And what is the effect of the change but to make the perpetual and inviolable edict of Christ yield to their devices? This is, indeed, a grievous evil. But still worse is the superstition which applies this work to the living and the dead, as a procuring cause of grace. In this way the efficacy of Christ's death has been transferred to a

vain theatrical show, and the dignity of an eternal priesthood wrested from him to be bestowed upon men. If at any time, the people are called to communion, they are admitted only to half a share. Why should this be? Christ holds forth the cup to all, and bids all drink of it. In opposition to this, men interdict the assembly of the faithful from touching the cup. Thus the signs, which by the authority of Christ were connected by an indissoluble tie, are separated by human caprice. Besides, the consecration, both of baptism and of the mass, differs in no respect whatever from magical incantations. For by breathings and whisperings, and unintelligible sounds, they think they work mysteries. As if it had been the wish of Christ, that in the performance of religious rites, his word should be muttered over, and not rather pronounced in a clear voice. There is no obscurity in the words by which the Gospel expresses the power, nature, and use of baptism. Then, in the supper, Christ does not mutter over the bread, but addresses the apostles in distinct terms, when he announces the promise and subjoins the command, "This do in remembrance of me." Instead of this public commemoration, they whisper out secret exorcisms, fitter, as I have observed, for magical arts than sacraments. The first thing we complain of here is, that the people are entertained with showy ceremonies, while not a word is said of their significancy and truth. For there is no use in the sacraments unless

the thing which the sign visibly represents is explained in accordance with the word of God. Therefore, when the people are presented with nothing but empty figures, with which to feed the eye, while they hear no doctrine which might direct them to the proper end, they look no further than the external act. Hence that most pestilential superstition, under which, as if the sacraments alone were sufficient for salvation, without feeling any solicitude about faith or repentance, or even Christ himself, they fasten upon the sign instead of the thing signified by it. And, indeed, not only among the rude vulgar, but in the schools also, the impious dogma everywhere obtained, that the sacraments were effectual by themselves, if not obstructed in their operation by mortal sin; as if the sacraments had been given for any other end or use than to lead us by the hand to Christ. Then, in addition to this, after consecrating the bread by a perverse incantation, rather than a pious rite, they keep it in a little box, and occasionally carry it about in solemn state, that it may be adored and prayed to instead of Christ. Accordingly, when any danger presses, they flee to that bread as their only protection, use it as a charm against all accidents, and, in asking pardon of God, employ it as the best expiation; as if Christ, when he gave us his body in the sacrament, had meant that it should be prostituted to all sorts of absurdity. For what is the amount of the promise? Simply this,—that as often as we received

the sacrament, we should be partakers of his body and blood—"Take," says he, "eat and drink; this is my body, this is my blood. This do in remembrance of me." Do we not see that the promise is on either side inclosed by limits within which we must confine ourselves if we would secure what it offers? Those, therefore, are deceived who imagine that apart from the legitimate use of the sacrament, they have anything but common and unconsecrated bread. Then, again, there is a profanation common to all these religious rites, viz., that they are made the subjects of a disgraceful traffic, as if they had been instituted for no other purpose than to be subservient to gain. Nor is this traffic conducted secretly or bashfully; it is plied openly, as at the public mart. It is known in each particular district how much a mass sells for. Other rites, too, have their fixed prices. In short, any one who considers must see that churches are just ordinary shops, and that there is no kind of sacred rite which is not there exposed for sale.

Were I to go over the faults of ecclesiastical government in detail, I should never have done. I will, therefore, only point to some of the grosser sort, which cannot be disguised. And, first, the pastoral office itself, as instituted by Christ, has long been in desuetude. His object in appointing Bishops and Pastors, or whatever the name be by which they are called, certainly was, as Paul declares, that they might edify the Church with

sound doctrine. According to this view, no man is a true pastor of the Church who does not perform the office of teaching. But, in the present day, almost all those who have the name of pastors have left that work to others. Scarcely one in a hundred of the Bishops will be found who ever mounts the pulpit in order to teach. And no wonder; for bishoprics have degenerated into secular principalities. Pastors of inferior rank, again, either think that they fulfil their office by frivolous performances altogether alien from the command of Christ, or, after the example of the Bishops, throw even this part of the duty on the shoulders of others. Hence the letting of sacerdotal offices is not less common than the letting of farms. What would we more? The spiritual government which Christ recommended has totally disappeared, and a new and mongrel species of government has been introduced, which, under whatever name it may pass current, has no more resemblance to the former than the world has to the kingdom of Christ. If it be objected that the fault of those who neglect their duty ought not to be imputed to the order, I answer, first, that the evil is of such general prevalence, that it may be regarded as the common rule; and, secondly, that, were we to assume that all the Bishops, and all the Presbyters under them, reside each in his particular station, and do what in the present day is regarded as professional duty, they would never fulfil the true institution

of Christ. They would sing or mutter in the church, exhibit themselves in theatrical vestments, and go through numerous ceremonies, but they would seldom, if ever, teach. According to the precept of Christ, however, no man can claim for himself the office of bishop or pastor who does not feed his flock with the word of the Lord.

Then while those who preside in the Church ought to excel others, and shine by the example of a holier life, how well do those who hold the office in the present day correspond in this respect to their vocation! At a time when the corruption of the world is at its height, there is no order more addicted to all kinds of wickedness. I wish that by their innocence they would refute what I say. How gladly would I at once retract! But their turpitude stands exposed to the eyes of all—exposed their insatiable avarice and rapacity—exposed their intolerable pride and cruelty. The noise of indecent revelry and dancing, the rage of gaming, and entertainments, abounding in all kinds of intemperance, are in their houses only ordinary occurrences, while they glory in their luxurious delicacies, as if they were distinguished virtues. To pass over other things in silence, what impurity in that celibacy which of itself they regard as a title to esteem! I feel ashamed to unveil enormities which I had much rather suppress, if they could be corrected by silence. Nor will I divulge what is done in secret. The pollutions which openly

appear are more than sufficient. How many priests, pray, are free from whoredom? Nay, how many of their houses are infamous for daily acts of lewdness? How many honourable families do they defile by their vagabond lusts? For my part, I have no pleasure in exposing their vices, and it is no part of my design, but it is of importance to observe what a wide difference there is between the conduct of the priesthood of the present day, and that which true ministers of Christ and his Church are bound to pursue.

Not the least important branch of ecclesiastical government is the due and regular election and ordination of those who are to rule. The word of God furnishes a standard by which all such appointments ought to be tested, and there exist many decrees of ancient Councils which carefully and wisely provide for every thing which relates to the proper method of election. Let our adversaries then produce even a solitary instance of canonical election, and I will yield them the victory. We know the kind of examination which the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of Paul, (Epistles of Timothy and Titus,) requires a pastor to undergo, and that which the ancient laws of the Fathers enjoin. At the present day, in appointing Bishops, is anything of the kind perceived? Nay, how few of those who are raised to the office are endowed even slenderly with those qualities without which they cannot be fit ministers of the Church! We see the order which the

Apostles observed in ordaining ministers, that which the primitive Church afterwards followed, and, finally, that which the ancient Canons require to be observed. Were I to complain that at present this order is spurned and rejected, would not the complaint be just? What, then, when I say that every thing honourable is trampled upon, and promotion obtained by the most disgraceful and flagitious proceedings? The fact is of universal notoriety. For ecclesiastical honours are either purchased for a set price, or seized by the hand of violence, or secured by nefarious actions, or acquired by sordid sycophancy. Occasionally even, they are the hire paid for panderism and similar services. In short, more shameless proceedings are exhibited here than ever occur in the acquisition of secular possessions.

And would that those who preside in the Church, when they corrupt its government, only sinned for themselves, or at least injured others by nothing but their bad example! But the most crying evil of all is, that they exercise a most cruel tyranny, and that a tyranny over souls. Nay, what is the vaunted power of the Church in the present day, but a lawless, licentious, unrestricted domination over souls, subjecting them to the most miserable bondage? Christ gave to the Apostles an authority similar to that which God had conferred on the prophets, an authority exactly defined, viz., to act as his ambassadors to men. Now, the invariable law is,

that he who is entrusted with an embassy must faithfully and religiously conform to his instructions. This is stated in express terms in the Apostolical commission,—“Go and teach all nations whatsoever things I have delivered unto you.” Likewise “preach,” (not anything you please,) but the “Gospel.” If it is asked what the authority is with which their successors were invested, we have the definition of Peter, which enjoins all who speak in the Church to speak “the oracles” of God. Now, however, those who would be thought the rulers of the Church, usurp to themselves a licence to speak whatsoever they please, and to insist that as soon as they have spoken they shall be implicitly obeyed. It will be averred that this is a calumny, that the only right which they assume is that of sanctioning by their authority what the Holy Spirit has revealed. They will, accordingly, maintain that they do not subject the consciences of believers to their own devices or caprice, but only to the oracles of the Spirit, which, being revealed to them, they confirm and promulgate to others. Forsooth an ingenious pretext! No man doubts that in whatever the Holy Spirit delivers by their hands they are to be unhesitatingly obeyed. But when they add that they cannot deliver any thing but the genuine oracles of the Holy Spirit, because they are under his guidance, and that all their decisions cannot but be true because they sit in chairs of verity, is not this just to measure their power by their

caprice? For if all their decrees, without exception, are to be received as oracles, there is no limit to their power. What tyrant ever so monstrously abused the patience of his subjects as to insist that every thing he proclaimed should be received as a message from heaven? Tyrants, no doubt, will have their edicts obeyed, be the edicts what they may. But these men demand much more. We must believe that the Holy Spirit speaks when they obtrude upon us what they have dreamed.

We see, accordingly, how hard and iniquitous the bondage is in which, when armed with this power, they have enthralled the souls of the faithful. Laws have been piled above laws, to be so many snares to the conscience. For they have not confined these laws to matters of external order, but applied them to the interior and spiritual government of the soul. And no end was made until they amounted to that immense multitude, which now looks not unlike a labyrinth. Indeed, some of them seem framed for the very purpose of troubling and torturing consciences, while the observance of them is enforced with not less strictness than if they contained the whole substance of piety. Nay, though in regard to the violation of the commands of God, either no question is asked, or slight penances are inflicted, any thing done contrary to the decrees of men requires the highest expiation. While the Church is oppressed by this tyrannical yoke, any one who dares

to say a word against it is instantly condemned as a heretic. In short, to give vent to our grief is a capital offence. And in order to ensure the possession of this insufferable domination, they, by sanguinary edicts, prevent the people from reading and understanding the Scriptures, and fulminate against those who stir any question as to their power. This excessive rigour increases from day to day, so that now on the subject of religion it is scarcely permitted to make any inquiry at all.

At the time when divine truth lay buried under this vast and dense cloud of darkness—when religion was sullied by so many impious superstitions—when by horrid blasphemies the worship of God was corrupted, and His glory laid prostrate—when by a multitude of perverse opinions, the benefit of redemption was frustrated, and men, intoxicated with a fatal confidence in works, sought salvation any where rather than in Christ—when the administration of the Sacraments was partly maimed and rent asunder, partly adulterated by the administration of numerous fictions, and partly profaned by traffickings for gain—when the government of the Church had degenerated into mere disorder and devastation—when those who sat in the seat of pastors first injured the Church most vitally by the dissoluteness of their lives, and, secondly, exercised a cruel and most noxious tyranny over souls, by every kind of error, leading men on like sheep to the slaughter;—then

Luther arose, and was followed by others, who with united counsels sought out means and methods by which religion might be purified from so many defilements, the doctrine of godliness restored to its integrity, and the Church raised out of its calamitous, into somewhat of a tolerable condition. We in the present day are still pursuing the same course.

I come now to consider, as I proposed, the remedies which we have employed for the correction of these evils, not here intending to describe the manner in which we proceeded, (that will afterwards be seen,) but only to make it manifest that we have had no other end in view than to ameliorate in some degree the very miserable condition of the Church. Our doctrine has been assailed, and still is every day, by many atrocious calumnies. Some declaim loudly against it in their sermons; others attack and traduce it in their writings. Both scrape together every thing by which they hope to bring it into disrepute among the ignorant. But the Confession of our Faith, which we presented to your Imperial Majesty, is before the world, and clearly testifies how undeservedly we are harassed by so many odious accusations. And we have always been ready in times past, as we are at the present day, to render an account of our doctrine. In a word, there is no doctrine preached in our churches but that which we openly profess. As to controverted points, they are clearly and honestly explained in our

Confession, while every thing relating to them has been copiously treated and diligently expounded by our writers. Hence judges not unjust must be satisfied how far we are from any thing like impiety. This much, certainly, must be clear alike to just and unjust, that our reformers have done no small service to the Church, in stirring up the world as from the deep darkness of ignorance, to the reading of the Scriptures, in labouring diligently to make them better understood, and in happily illustrating certain points of doctrine of the highest practical importance. In sermons little else was heard than old wives' fables, and fictions equally frivolous. The schools resounded with brawling questions, but Scripture was seldom mentioned. Those who held the government of the Church made it their sole care to prevent any diminution of their gains, and, accordingly, had no difficulty in permitting whatever tended to fill their coffers. Even the most prejudiced, how much soever they may in other respects defame our doctrine, admit that our people have in some degree reformed these evils.

I am willing, however, that all the advantage which the Church may have derived from our labours, shall have no effect in alleviating our fault, if in any other respect we have done her injury. Therefore, let there be an examination of our whole doctrine, of our form of administering the sacraments, and our method of governing the Church; and in none of these three heads will it be found

that we have made any change upon the ancient form, without attempting to restore it to the exact standard of the word of God.

To return to the division which we formerly adopted. All our controversies concerning doctrine relate either to the legitimate worship of God, or to the ground of salvation. As to the former, unquestionably we do exhort men to worship God neither in a frigid nor a careless manner; and while we point out the mode, we neither lose sight of the end, nor omit any thing which is of importance. We proclaim the glory of God in terms far loftier than it was wont to be proclaimed before, and we earnestly labour to make the perfections in which His glory shines better and better known. His benefits towards ourselves we extol as eloquently as we can, while we call upon others to reverence His Majesty, render due homage to His greatness, feel due gratitude for His mercies, and unite in showing forth His praise. In this way there is infused into their hearts that solid confidence which afterwards gives birth to prayer; and in this way, too, each one is trained to genuine self-denial, so that his will being brought into obedience to God, he bids farewell to his own desires. In short, as God requires us to worship Him in a spiritual manner, so we most zealously urge men to all the sacrifices of spirit which he recommends.

Even our enemies cannot deny our assiduity in exhorting men to expect the good which

they desire from none but God, to confide in His power, rest in His goodness, depend on His truth, and turn to Him with the whole heart—to recline upon Him with full hope, and recur to Him in necessity, that is, at every moment to ascribe to him every good thing which is enjoyed, and attest it by open expressions of praise. And that none may be deterred by difficulty of access, we proclaim that a complete fountain of blessings is opened up to us in Christ, and that out of it we may draw for every need. Our writings are witnesses, and our sermons witnesses, that we are frequent and sedulous in recommending true repentance, urging men to renounce their own reason and carnal desires, and themselves entirely, that being brought into obedience to God alone, they may live no longer to themselves, but to Him. Nor, at the same time, do we overlook external duties and works of charity, which follow on such renovation. This, I say, is the sure and unerring form of worship, which we know that He approves, because it is the form which His word prescribes, and these the only sacrifices of the Christian Church which have His sanction.

Since, therefore, in our churches, one God is adored in pious form without superstition, since His goodness, wisdom, power, truth, and other perfections, are preached more fully than any where else—since He is invoked with true faith in the name of Christ, His mercies celebrated both with heart and tongue, and

men constantly urged to a simple and sincere obedience; since, in fine, nothing is heard but what tends to promote the sanctification of His name, what cause have those who call themselves Christians to be so inveterate against us? First, loving darkness rather than light, they cannot tolerate the sharpness with which, as in duty bound, we rebuke the gross idolatry which is every where beheld in the world. When God is worshipped in images, when fictitious worship is instituted in His name, when supplication is made to the images of saints, and divine honours paid to dead men's bones, against these, and similar abominations, we protest, describing them in their true colours. For this cause, those who hate our doctrine inveigh against us, and represent us as heretics who have dared to abolish the worship of God, as of old approved by the Church. With regard to this name of *church*, which they are ever and anon holding up before them as a kind of shield, we will shortly speak. Meanwhile, how perverse, when these flagitious corruptions are manifest, not only to defend them, but cloak their deformity, by impudently pretending that they belong to the genuine worship of God!

Both parties confess, that in the sight of God idolatry is an execrable crime. But when we attack the worship of images, our adversaries immediately take the opposite side, and lend their support to the crime which they had verbally concurred with us

in condemning. Nay, what is more ridiculous, after agreeing with us as to the term in Greek, it is no sooner turned into Latin than their opposition begins. For they strenuously defend the worship of images, though they condemn idolatry—ingenious men denying that the honour which they pay to images is worship; as if, in comparing them with ancient idolaters, it were possible to see any difference. Idolaters pretended that they worshipped the celestial gods, though under corporeal figures which represented them. What else do our adversaries pretend? But does God accept of such excuses? Did the prophets cease to rebuke the madness of the Egyptians, when, out of the secret mysteries of their theology, they drew subtle distinctions under which to screen themselves? What, too, do we suppose the brazen serpent, which the Jews worshipped, to have been, but something which they honoured as a representation of God? “The Gentiles,” says Ambrose, (in Psal. cxviii.,) “worship wood, because they think it an image of God, whereas the invisible image of God is not in that which is seen, but specially in that which is not seen.” And what is it that is done in the present day? Do they not prostrate themselves before images, as if God were present in them? Did they not suppose the power and grace of God attached to pictures and statues, would they flee to them when they are desirous to pray?

I have not yet adverted to the grosser su-

perstitutions, though these cannot be confined to the ignorant, since they are approved by public consent. They adorn their idols now with flowers and chaplets, now with robes, vests, zones, purses, and frivolities of every kind. They light tapers and burn incense before them, and carry them on their shoulders in solemn state. When they pray to the image of Christopher or Barbara, they mutter over the Lord's Prayer and the angel's salutation. The fairer or smokier the images are, the greater is their excellence supposed to be. To this is added a new recommendation from fabulous miracles. Some they pretend to have spoken, others to have extinguished a fire in the church with their feet, others to have removed of their own accord to a new abode, others to have dropped from heaven. While the whole world teems with these and similar delusions, and the fact is perfectly notorious, we, who have brought back the worship of the one God to the rule of his word, we, who are blameless in this matter, and have purged our churches, not only of idolatry but of superstition also, are accused of violating the worship of God, because we have discarded the worship of images, that is, as we call it, *idolatry*, but as our adversaries will have it, *idolodulia*.

But, besides the clear testimonies which are every where met with in Scripture, we are also supported by the authority of the ancient Church. All the writers of a purer age describe the abuse of images among the Gentiles

as not differing from what is seen in the world in the present day; and their observations on the subject are not less applicable to the present age, than to the persons whom they then censured. As to the charge which they bring against us for discarding images, as well as the bones and relics of saints, it is easily answered. For none of these things ought to be valued at more than the brazen serpent, and the reasons for removing them were not less valid than those of Hezekiah for breaking it. It is certain that the *idolomania*, with which the minds of men are now fascinated, cannot be cured otherwise than by removing bodily the source of the infatuation. And we have too much experience of the absolute truth of St. Augustine's sentiment, (Ep. xlix.) "No man prays or worships looking on an image, without being impressed with the idea that it is listening to him." And, likewise, (in Psalm cxv. 4,) "Images, from having a mouth, eyes, ears, and feet, are more effectual to mislead an unhappy soul than to correct it, because they neither speak, nor see, nor hear, nor walk." Also, "the effect in a manner extorted by the external shape is, that the soul living in a body, thinks a body which it sees so very like its own must have similar powers of perception." As to the matter of relics, it is almost incredible how impudently the world has been cheated. I can mention three remains of our Saviour's circumcision; likewise fourteen nails which are exhibited for the three by

which he was fixed to the cross; three robes for that seamless one on which the soldiers cast lots; two inscriptions that were placed over the cross; three spears by which our Saviour's side was pierced, and about five sets of linen clothes which wrapt his body in the tomb. Besides, they show all the articles used at the institution of the Lord's Supper, and an infinite number of similar impositions. There is no saint of any celebrity of whom two or three bodies are not in existence. I can name the place where a piece of pumice stone was long held in high veneration as the skull of Peter. Decency will not permit me to mention fouler exhibitions. Undeservedly, therefore, are we blamed for having studied to purify the Church of God from such pollutions.

In regard to the worship of God, our adversaries next accuse us, because, omitting empty and childish observances, tending only to hypocrisy, we worship God more simply. That we have in no respect detracted from the spiritual worship of God, is attested by fact. Nay, when it had in a great measure gone into desuetude, we have reinstated it in its former rights. Let us now see whether the offence taken at us is just. In regard to doctrine, I maintain that we make common cause with the prophets. For, next to idolatry, there is nothing for which they rebuke the people more sharply than for falsely imagining that the worship of God consisted in external show. For what is the sum of their

declarations? That God dwells not, and sets no value on ceremonies considered only in themselves, and that the only end for which he commanded, and for which he approves them, is, that they may be exercises of pure faith, and prayer, and praise. The writings of all the prophets are full of attestations to this effect. Nor, as I have observed, was there any thing for which they laboured more. Now, it cannot, without effrontery, be denied, that when our reformers appeared, the world was more than ever smitten with this blindness. It was therefore absolutely necessary to urge men with these prophetic rebukes, and draw them off, as by force, from that infatuation, that they might no longer imagine that God was satisfied with naked ceremonies, as children are with shows. There was a like necessity for urging the doctrine of the spiritual worship of God—a doctrine which had almost vanished from the minds of men. That both of these things have been faithfully performed by us in times past, and still are, both our writings and our sermons clearly prove.

In inveighing against ceremonies themselves, and also in abrogating a great part of them, we confess that there is some difference between us and the prophets. They inveighed against their countrymen for confining the worship of God to external ceremonies; but still ceremonies which God himself had instituted. We complain that the same honour is paid to frivolities of man's

devising. They, while condemning superstition, left untouched a multitude of ceremonies which God had enjoined, and which were useful and appropriate to an age of tutelage. Our business has been to correct numerous rites which had either crept in through oversight, or been turned to abuse; and which, moreover, by no means accorded with the time. For, if we would not throw every thing into confusion, we must never lose sight of the distinction between the old and the new dispensations, and of the fact that ceremonies, the observance of which was useful under the law, are now not only superfluous, but vicious and absurd. When Christ was absent and not yet manifested, ceremonies, by adumbrating, cherished the hope of his advent in the breasts of believers; but now that his glory is present and conspicuous, they only obscure it. And we see what God himself has done. For those ceremonies which he had commanded for a time he has abrogated for ever. Paul explains the reason,—first, that since the body has been manifested in Christ, the types have, of course, been withdrawn; and, secondly, that God is now pleased to instruct his Church after a different manner. (Gal. iv. 5; Col. ii. 4, 14, 17.) Since, then, God has freed his Church from the bondage which he had imposed upon it, can any thing, I ask, be more perverse than for men to introduce a new bondage in place of the old? Since God has prescribed a certain economy, how

presumptuous to set up one which is contrary to it, and openly repudiated by him! But the worst of all is, that though God has so often and so strictly interdicted all modes of worship prescribed by man, the only worship paid to him consisted of human inventions. What ground, then, have our enemies to vociferate that in this matter we have given religion to the winds? First, we have not laid even a finger on any thing which Christ does not discountenance as of no value, when he declares that it is vain to worship God with human traditions. The thing might, perhaps, have been more tolerable if the only effect had been that men lost their pains by an unavailing worship; but since, as I have observed, God in many passages forbids any new worship unsanctioned by his word, since he declares that he is grievously offended with the presumption which invents such worship, and threatens it with severe punishment, it is clear that the reformation which we have introduced was demanded by a strong necessity.

I am not unaware how difficult it is to persuade the world that God rejects and even abominates every thing relating to his worship that is devised by human reason. The delusion on this head is owing to several causes,—“Every one thinks highly of his own,” as the old proverb expresses it. Hence the offspring of our own brain delights us; and besides, as Paul admits, this fictitious worship often presents some show of wisdom.

Then, as it has for the most part an external splendour which pleases the eye, it is more agreeable to our carnal nature, than that which alone God requires and approves, but which is less ostentatious. But there is nothing which so blinds the understandings of men, and misleads them in their judgments in this matter, as hypocrisy. For while it is incumbent on true worshippers to give the heart and mind, men are always desirous to invent a mode of serving God of a totally different description, their object being to perform to him certain bodily observances, and keep the mind to themselves. Moreover, they imagine that when they obtrude upon him external pomp, they have, by this artifice, evaded the necessity of giving themselves. And this is the reason why they submit to innumerable observances which miserably fatigue them without measure and without end, and why they choose to wander in a perpetual labyrinth, rather than worship God simply in spirit and in truth.

It is a mere calumny, then, in our enemies to accuse us of alluring men by facilities and indulgence. For were the option given, there is nothing which the carnal man would not prefer to do, rather than consent to worship God as prescribed by our doctrine. It is easy to use the words faith and repentance, but the things are most difficult to perform. He, therefore, who makes the worship of God consist in these, by no means relaxes the reins of discipline, but compels men to the course

which they are most afraid to take. Of this we have most pregnant proof from fact. Men will allow themselves to be bound by numerous severe laws, to be obliged to numerous laborious observances, to wear a severe and heavy yoke, in short, there is no annoyance to which they will not submit, provided there is no mention of the heart. Hence, it appears, that there is nothing to which the human mind is more averse than to that spiritual truth which is the constant topic of our sermons, and nothing with which it is more engrossed than that splendid glare on which our adversaries so strongly insist. The very Majesty of God extorts this much from us, that we are unable to withdraw entirely from his service. Therefore, as we cannot evade the necessity of worshipping him, our only remaining course is to seek out indirect substitutes, that we may not be obliged to come directly into his presence; or, rather, by means of external ceremonies, as a kind of specious masks, we hide the inward malice of the heart, and, in order that we may not be forced to give it to him, interpose bodily observances, like a wall of partition. It is with the greatest reluctance that the world allows itself to be driven from such subterfuges as these; and hence the outcry against us for having dragged them out into the open light of day, out of their lurking places, where they securely sported with God.

In prayer there are three things which we have corrected. Bidding adieu to the in-

tercession of saints, we have brought men back to Christ, that they might learn both to invoke the Father in his name, and trust in him as Mediator, and we have taught them to pray, first, with firm and solid confidence, and, secondly, with understanding also, instead of continuing as formerly to mutter over confused prayers in an unknown tongue. Here we are assailed with bitter reproaches, as at once acting contumeliously towards the saints, and defrauding believers of an invaluable privilege. Both charges we deny. It is no injury to saints not to permit the office of Christ to be attributed to them, and there is no honour of which we deprive them, save that which was improperly and rashly bestowed upon them by human error. I will not mention anything which may not be pointed to with the finger. First, when men are about to pray, they imagine God to be at a great distance, and that they cannot have access to him without the guidance of some patron. Nor is this false opinion current among the rude and unlearned only, but even those who would be thought leaders of the blind entertain it. Then, in looking out for patrons, every one follows his own fancy. One selects Mary, another Michael, another Peter. Christ they very seldom honour with a place in the list. Nay, there is scarcely one in a hundred who would not be amazed, as at some new prodigy, were he to hear Christ named as an intercessor. Therefore, passing by Christ, they

all trust to the patronage of saints. Then the superstition creeps in further and further, till they invoke the saints promiscuously, just as they do God. I admit, indeed, that when they desire to speak more definitely, all they ask of the saints is to assist them before God with their prayers. But more frequently, confounding this distinction, they address and implore at one time God, and at another the saints, just according to the impulse of the moment. Nay, each saint has a peculiar province allotted to him. One gives rain, another fair weather, one delivers from fever, another from shipwreck. But, to say nothing of the profane heathen delusions which every where prevail in churches, this one impiety may suffice for all, that the great body of mankind, in inviting intercessors from this quarter, and from that, neglect Christ, the only one whom God has proposed, and confide less in the Divine protection than in the patronage of saints.

But our censors, even those of them who have somewhat more regard to equity, blame us for excess in having discarded entirely from our prayers the mention of dead saints! But will they tell me, wherein, according to their view, lies the sin of faithfully observing the rule laid down by Christ the supreme Teacher, and by the Prophets and Apostles, and of not omitting any thing which either the Holy Spirit has taught in Scripture, or the servants of God have practised from the beginning of the world down to the days

of the Apostles? There is scarcely any subject in which the Holy Spirit more carefully prescribes than on the proper method of prayer; but there is not a syllable which teaches us to have recourse to the assistance of dead saints. Many of the prayers offered up by believers are extant. In none of them is there even a single example of such recourse. Sometimes, indeed, the Israelites entreated God to remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and David likewise. But all they meant by such expressions was, that he should be mindful of the covenant which he had made with them, and bless their posterity according to his promise. For the Covenant of Grace, which was ultimately to be ratified in Christ, those holy patriarchs had received in their own name, and in that of their posterity. Wherefore, the faithful of the Israelitish Church do not, by such mention of the patriarchs, seek intercession from the dead, but simply appeal to the promise which had been deposited with them antecedently to its full ratification in the hand of Christ. How extravagant, then, and infatuated, to abandon the form of prayer which the Lord has recommended, and without any injunction, and with no example, to introduce into prayer the intercession of saints! But briefly to conclude this point, I take my stand on the declaration of Paul, that no prayer is genuine which springs not from faith, and that faith cometh by the word of God. (Rom. x. 14.) In these words he has, if I mistake not, distinctly inti-

mated that the word of God is the only sure foundation for prayer. And while he elsewhere says, that every action of our lives should be preceded by faith, *i. e.* a conscientious assurance, he shows that this is specially requisite in prayer, more so, indeed, than in any other employment. It is, however, still more conclusive of the point, when he declares that prayer depends on the word of God. For it is just as if it had prohibited all men from opening their mouths until such time as God puts words into them. This is our wall of brass, which all the powers of hell will in vain attempt to break down. Since, then, there exists a clear command to invoke God only; since, again, one Mediator is proposed, whose intercession must support our prayers; since a promise has, moreover, been added, that whatever we ask in the name of Christ, we shall obtain, men must pardon us, if we follow the certain truth of God, in preference to their frivolous fictions. It is surely incumbent on those who, in their prayers, introduce the intercession of the dead, to prove one of two things, either that they are so taught by the word of God, or that men have license to pray as they please. But in regard to the former, it is plain that they are destitute of authority from the Scriptures, as well as of any approved example of such intercession; while, as to the latter, Paul declares that none can invoke God, save those who have been taught by his word to pray. On this depends the confidence with which it becomes pious

minds to be actuated and imbued when they engage in prayer. The men of the world supplicate God, dubious, meanwhile, of success. For they neither rely upon the promise, nor perceive the force of what is meant by having a Mediator through whom they will assuredly obtain what they ask. Moreover, God enjoins us to come free from doubt. (Matt. xxi. 22.) Accordingly, prayer proceeding from true faith obtains favour with God; whereas, prayer accompanied with distrust rather alienates Him from us. For this is the proper mark which discriminates between genuine invocation and the profane wandering prayers of the heathen. And, indeed, where faith is wanting, prayer ceases to be divine worship. It is to this James refers when he says, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God; but let him ask in faith, doubting nothing. For he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the winds, and tossed." (James i. 6.) It is not surprising that he who has no interest in Christ the true Mediator, thus fluctuates in uncertainty and distrust. For, as Paul declares, it is through Christ only that we have boldness and access with confidence to the Father. We have, therefore, taught men when brought to Christ no longer to doubt and waver in their prayers, as they were wont to do, but to rest secure in the word of the Lord, a word which, when it once penetrates the soul, drives far from it all dubiety, which is repugnant to faith.

It remains to point out the third fault in prayer, which we have corrected. Whereas, men generally prayed in an unknown tongue, we have taught them to pray with understanding. Every man, accordingly, is taught by our doctrine to know, when he prays in private, what it is he asks of God, while the public prayers in our churches are framed so as to be understood by all. And it is the dictate of natural reason that it should be so, even if God had given no precept on the subject. For the design of prayer is to make God the conscious witness of our necessities, and as it were to pour out our hearts before him. But nothing is more at variance with this design, than to move the tongue without thought and intelligence. And yet, to such a degree of absurdity had it come, that to pray in the vulgar tongue was almost regarded as an offence against religion. I can name an Archbishop who threatened with incarceration, and the severer penances, the person who should repeat the Lord's Prayer aloud in any language but Latin. The general belief, however, was, that it mattered not in what language a man prayed at home, provided he had what was called a final intention directed to prayer; but that in churches the dignity of the service required that Latin should be the only language in which prayers were couched.

There seems, as I lately observed, something monstrous in this determination to hold conference with God in sounds which fall

without meaning from the tongue. Even if God did not declare his displeasure, nature herself, without a monitor, rejects it. Besides, it is easy to infer from the whole tenor of Scripture how deeply God abominates such an invention. As to the public prayers of the Church, the words of Paul are clear—the unlearned cannot say Amen if the benediction is pronounced in an unknown tongue. And this makes it the more strange, that those who first introduced this perverse practice, ultimately had the effrontery to maintain, that the very thing which Paul regards as ineffably absurd, was conducive to the majesty of prayer. The method by which, in our churches, all pray in common in the popular tongue, and males and females indiscriminately sing the Psalms, our adversaries may ridicule if they will, provided the Holy Spirit bears testimony to us from heaven, while he repudiates the confused, unmeaning sounds which are uttered elsewhere.

In the second principal branch of doctrine, viz., that which relates to the ground of salvation, and the method of obtaining it, many questions are involved: For, when we tell a man to seek righteousness and life out of himself, *i. e.*, in Christ, because he has nothing in himself but sin and death, a controversy immediately arises with reference to the freedom and powers of the will. For, if man has any ability of his own to serve God, he does not obtain salvation entirely by the grace of Christ, but in part bestows it on

himself. On the other hand, if the whole of salvation is attributed to the grace of Christ, man has nothing left, has no virtue of his own by which he can assist himself to procure salvation. But though our opponents concede that man, in every good deed, is assisted by the Holy Spirit, they nevertheless claim for him a share in the operation. This they do, because they perceive not how deep the wound is which was inflicted on our nature by the fall of our first parents. No doubt, they agree with us in holding the doctrine of original sin, but they afterwards modify its effects, maintaining that the powers of man are only weakened, not wholly depraved. Their view, accordingly, is, that man being tainted with original corruption, is, in consequence of the weakening of his powers, unable to act aright; but that, being aided by the grace of God, he has something of his own, and from himself, which he is able to contribute. We, on the contrary, though we deny not that man acts spontaneously, and of free will, when he is guided by the Holy Spirit, maintain that his whole nature is so imbued with depravity, that of himself he possesses no ability whatever to act aright. Thus far, therefore, do we dissent from those who oppose our doctrine, that while they neither humble man sufficiently, nor duly estimate the blessing of regeneration, we lay him completely prostrate, that he may become sensible of his utter insufficiency in regard to spiritual righteousness, and learn to seek it, not

partially, but wholly, from God. To some not very equitable judges, we seem, perhaps, to carry the matter too far; but there is nothing absurd in our doctrine, and nothing at variance either with Scripture or with the general consent of the ancient Church. Nay, we are able, without any difficulty, to confirm our doctrine to the very letter out of the mouth of Augustine; and, accordingly, several of those who are otherwise disaffected to our cause, but somewhat sounder in their judgments, do not venture to contradict us on this head. It is certain, as I have already observed, that we differ from others only in this, that by convincing man of his poverty and powerlessness, we train him more effectually to true humility, leading him to renounce all self-confidence, and throw himself entirely upon God; and that, in like manner, we train him more effectually to gratitude, by leading him, as in truth he ought, to ascribe every good thing which he possesses to the kindness of God. They, on the other hand, intoxicating him with a perverse opinion of his own virtue, precipitate his ruin, inflating him with impious arrogance against God, to whom he assigns the glory of his justification in no greater degree than to himself. To these errors they add a third, viz., that, in all their discussions concerning the corruption of human nature, they usually stop short at the grosser carnal desires, without touching on deeper-seated and more deadly diseases. Hence it is, that those who are

trained in their school easily forgive themselves the foulest sins, as no sins at all, provided they are hid.

The next question relates to the value and merit of works. We both render to good works their due praise, and we deny not that a reward is reserved for them with God; but we take three exceptions, on which the whole of our remaining controversy concerning the work of salvation hinges.

First, we maintain, that of what description soever any man's works may be, he is regarded as righteous simply on the footing of gratuitous mercy; because God, without any respect to works, freely adopts him in Christ, by imputing the righteousness of Christ to him, as if it were his own. We designate it as the righteousness of faith, when a man, made void and empty of all confidence in works, feels convinced that the ground of his acceptance with God is a righteousness which is borrowed from Christ, and which is wanting to himself. The point on which the world always goes astray, (for this error has prevailed in almost every age,) is in imagining that man, however partially defective he may be, still in some degree merits the favour of God by works. But Scripture declares, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." Under this curse must necessarily lie all who are judged by works—none being exempted save those who entirely renounce all confidence in works,

and put on Christ, that they may be justified in Him, by the gratuitous acceptance of God. The ground of our justification, therefore, is, that God reconciles us to himself, from regard not to our works, but to Christ alone, and, by gratuitous adoption, makes us, instead of children of wrath, to be his own children. So long as God looks to our works, he perceives no reason why He ought to love us. Wherefore, it is necessary to bury our sins, and impute to us the obedience of Christ, (because the only obedience which can stand his scrutiny,) and adopt us as righteous through His merits. This is the clear and uniform doctrine of Scripture, "witnessed," as Paul says, "by the law and the prophets," (Rom. iii. 21;) and so explained by the Gospel, that a clearer law cannot be desired. Paul contrasts the righteousness of the law with the righteousness of the Gospel, placing the former in works, and the latter in the grace of Christ. (Rom. x. 5, &c.) He does not divide it into two halves, giving works the one, and Christ the other; but he ascribes it to Christ entirely that we are judged righteous in the sight of God.

There are here two questions, *first*, whether the glory of our salvation is to be divided between ourselves and God; and, *secondly*, whether, as in the sight of God, our conscience can with safety put any confidence in works. On the former question, Paul's decision is—let every mouth "be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God." "All

have sinned, and come short of the glory of God — being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;” and that “to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. iii. 19, &c.) We simply follow this definition, while our opponents maintain that man is not justified by the grace of God, in any sense which does not reserve part of the praise for his own works.

On the second question, Paul reasons thus: “If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.” Whence he concludes, “it is of faith,” “to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” (Rom. iv. 14, 16.) And again, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,” (Rom. v. 1;) and no longer dread His presence. And he intimates, what every one feels in his own experience, that we cannot but be in perpetual disquietude and fluctuation, so long as we look for protection from works, and that we enjoy serene and placid tranquillity then only, when we have recourse to Christ as the only haven of true confidence. We add nothing to Paul’s doctrine; but that restless dubiety of conscience, which he regards as absurd, is placed by our opponents among the primary axioms of their faith.

The second exception which we take relates to the remission of sins. Our opponents, not being able to deny that men, dur-

ing their whole lives, walk haltingly, and oftentimes even fall, are obliged, whether they will or not, to confess that all need pardon, in order to supply their want of righteousness. But then they have imaginary satisfactions, by means of which those who have sinned purchase back the favour of God. In this class, they place first contrition, and next a kind of works, which they term works of supererogation, and penances, which God inflicts on sinners. But, as they are still sensible that these compensations fall far short of the just measure required, they call in the aid of a new species of satisfaction from another quarter, namely, from the benefit of the keys. And they say, that by the keys the treasury of the Church is unlocked, and what is wanting to ourselves supplied out of the merits of Christ and the saints. We, on the contrary, maintain that the sins of men are forgiven freely, and we acknowledge no other satisfaction than that which Christ accomplished, when, by the sacrifice of His death, He expiated our sins. Therefore, we preach that it is the purchase of Christ alone which reconciles us to God, and that no compensations are taken into account, because our heavenly Father, contented with the sole expiation of Christ, requires none from us. In the Scriptures we have clear proof of this our doctrine, which, indeed, ought to be called not ours, but the doctrine of the universal Church. For the only method of regaining the divine favour, set forth by the Apostle, is,

that "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (1 Cor. v. 21.) And in another passage, where he is speaking of the remission of sins, he declares that through it righteousness without works is imputed to us. (Rom. iv. 5.) We, therefore, strenuously, yet truly, maintain that their idea of meriting reconciliation with God by satisfaction, and buying off the penalties due to His justice, is execrable blasphemy, in as much as it destroys the doctrine which Isaiah delivers concerning Christ—that "the chastisement of our peace was upon him." (Isaiah liii. 5.)

The absurd fiction concerning works of supererogation we discard for many reasons; but there are two of more than sufficient weight—the one, that it is impossible to tolerate the idea of man being able to perform to God more than he ought; and the other, that as by the term supererogation, they for the most part understand voluntary acts of worship which their own brain has devised, and which they obtrude upon God, it is lost labour and pains, so far are such acts from having any title to be regarded as expiations which appease the divine anger. Moreover, that mixing up of the blood of Christ with the blood of martyrs, and forming out of them a heterogeneous mass of merits or satisfactions, to buy off the punishments due to sin, are things which we have not tolerated, and which we ought not to tolerate.

For, as Augustine says, (Trad. in Joan. 84.) "No martyr's blood has been shed for the remission of sins. This was the work of Christ alone, and in this work he has bestowed not a thing which we should imitate, but one which we should gratefully receive." With Augustine, Leo admirably accords, when he thus writes, (Ep. 81, inter. 97,) "Though precious in the sight of God has been the death of his many saints, yet no innocent man's slaughter was the propitiation of the world; the just received crowns, did not give them; and the constancy of the faithful has furnished examples of patience, not gifts of righteousness."

Our third and last exception relates to the recompense of works—we maintaining that it depends not on their own value or merit, but rather on the mere benignity of God. Our opponents, indeed, admit that there is no proportion between the merit of the work and its reward; but they do not attend to what is of primary moment in the matter, viz., that the good works of believers are never so pure as that they can please without pardon. They consider not, I say, that they are always sprinkled with some spots or blemishes, because they never proceed from that pure and perfect love of God which is demanded by the law. Our doctrine, therefore, is, that the good works of believers are always devoid of a spotless purity which can stand the inspection of God; nay, that when they are

tried by the strict rule of justice, they are; to a certain extent, impure. But, when once God has graciously adopted believers, he not only accepts and loves their persons, but their works also, and condescends to honour them with a reward. In one word, as we said of man, so we say of works,—they are justified not by their own desert, but by the merits of Christ alone; the faults by which they would otherwise displease being covered by the sacrifice of Christ. This consideration is of very great practical importance, both in retaining men in the fear of God, that they may not arrogate to their works that which proceeds from his fatherly kindness; and also in inspiring them with the best consolation, and so preventing them from giving way to despondency, when they reflect on the imperfection or impurity of their works, by reminding them that God, of his paternal indulgence, is pleased to pardon it.

Having considered the two principal heads of doctrine, we come now to the Sacraments, in which we have not made any correction which we are unable to defend by sure and approved authority. Whereas, seven sacraments were supposed to have been instituted by Christ, we have discarded five of the number, and have demonstrated them to be ceremonies of man's devising, with the exception of marriage, which we acknowledge to have been indeed commanded by God, but not in order that it might be a sacrament.

Nor is it a dispute about nothing when we separate rites thus superadded on the part of men, though, in other respects, they should be neither wicked nor useless, from those sacred symbols which Christ commended to us by his own lips, and was pleased to make the testimonials of spiritual gifts,—gifts to which, as they are not in the power of man, men have no right to testify. It is assuredly no vulgar matter to seal upon our hearts the secret favour of God, to offer Christ, and give a visible representation of the blessings which we enjoy in him. This being the office of the sacraments, not to discriminate between them and rites originating with man, is to confound heaven with earth. Here, indeed, a twofold error had prevailed. Making no distinction between things human and divine, they derogated exceedingly from the sacred word of God, on which the whole power of the sacraments depends, while they also falsely imagined Christ to be the author of rites which had no higher than a human origin.

From baptism, in like manner, have we rescinded many additions which were partly useless, and partly, from their superstitious tendency, noxious. We know the form of baptism which the apostles received from Christ, which they observed during their lifetime, and which they finally left to posterity. But the simplicity which had been approved by the authority of Christ, and the practice of the apostles, did not satisfy succeeding ages. I am not at present discuss-

ing whether those persons were influenced by sound reasons, who afterwards added chrism, salt, spittle, and tapers. I only say, what every one must know, that to such a height had superstition or folly risen, that more value was set on these additions than on the genuineness of baptism itself. We have studied also to banish the preposterous confidence which stopped short at the external act, and paid not the least regard to Christ. For, as well in the schools as in sermons, they so extolled the efficacy of signs, that, instead of directing men to Christ, they taught them to confide in the visible elements. Lastly, we have brought back into our churches the ancient custom of accompanying the administration of the sacraments with an explanation of the doctrine contained in it, and at the same time expounding with all diligence and fidelity both the advantages and the legitimate use; so that, in this respect, even our opponents cannot find any ground of censure. But nothing is more alien to the nature of a sacrament than to set before the people an empty spectacle, unaccompanied with explanation of the mystery. There is a well-known passage quoted by Gratian out of Augustine—"If the word is wanting, the water is nothing but an element." Our opponents, therefore, ought not to think it a novelty when we disapprove of the exhibition of the sign, apart from the understanding of the mystery. For this is a sacrilegious divorce, which reverses the order

instituted by Christ. Another additional fault in the mode of administration, commonly used elsewhere, is, that the thing which they consider as a religious act is not understood, just as is the case in the performance of magical enchantments.

I have already observed, that the other sacrament of the Christian Church, the Holy Supper of our Lord, was not only corrupted, but nearly abolished. Wherefore it was the more necessary for us to labour in restoring its purity. First, it was necessary to eradicate from the minds of men that impious fiction of sacrifice, the source of many absurdities. For, besides the introduction of a rite of *oblation* in opposition to the express institution of Christ, there had been added a most pestilential opinion, that this act of oblation was an expiation for sin. Thus, the dignity of the priesthood, which belonged exclusively to Christ, had been transferred to mortal men, and the virtue of his death to their own act. Thus, also, it had come to be applied in behalf of the living and the dead. We have, therefore, abrogated that fictitious immolation, and restored communion, which had been in a very great measure obsolete. For, provided men went once a year to the Lord's table, they thought it enough, for all the remainder of that period, to be spectators of what was done by the priest, under the pretext, indeed, of administering the Lord's Supper, but without any vestige of the Supper

in it. For what are the words of the Lord? Take, eat, and distribute among yourselves. But in the mass, instead of *taking*, there is a pretence of *offering*, while there is no distribution, and even no invitation. The priest, like a member cut off from the rest of the body, prepares it for himself alone, and takes it alone. How immense the difference between the things! We have, besides, restored to the people the use of the cup, which, though it was not only permitted, but committed to them by our Lord, was taken from them (it could only be) at the suggestion of Satan. Of ceremonies, there are numbers which we have discarded, partly because they had multiplied out of measure, partly because some savoured too much of Judaism, and others the inventions of ignorant men, ill accorded with the gravity of so high a mystery. But, granting that there was no other evil in them than that they had crept in through oversight, was it not a sufficient ground for their abolition that we saw the vulgar gazing upon them in stupid amazement?

In condemning the fiction of transubstantiation, and likewise the custom of keeping and carrying about the bread, we were impelled by a stronger necessity. First, it is repugnant to the plain words of Christ; and, secondly, it is abhorrent to the very nature of a sacrament. For there is no sacrament where there is no visible symbol to correspond to the spiritual truth which it represents.

And with regard to the Supper, what Paul says is clear,—“We being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread,” (1 Cor. x. 17.) Where is the analogy or similitude of a visible sign in the Supper to correspond to the body and blood of our Lord, if it is neither bread that we eat, nor wine that we drink, but only some empty phantom that mocks the eye? Moreover to this fiction, a worse superstition perpetually adheres, viz., that men cling to that bread as if to God, and worship it as God, in the manner in which we have seen it done. While the sacrament ought to have been a means of raising pious minds to heaven, the sacred symbols of the Supper were abused to an entirely different purpose, and men, contented with gazing upon them and worshipping them, never once thought of Christ.

The carrying about of the bread in solemn state, or setting it on an elevated spot to be adored, are corruptions altogether inconsistent with the institution of Christ. For in the Supper the Lord sets before us his body and blood, but it is in order that we may eat and drink. Accordingly, he, in the first place, gives the command, by which he bids us take, eat, and drink, and then he, in the next place, subjoins and annexes the promise, in which he testifies, that what we eat is his body, and what we drink is his blood. Those, therefore, who either keep the bread set apart, or who carry it about to be worshipped, seeing

they separate the promise from the command, in other words, sever an indissoluble tie, imagine, indeed, that they have the body of Christ, whereas, in fact, they have nothing but an idol which they have devised for themselves. For this promise of Christ, by which he offers his own body and blood under the symbols of bread and wine, belongs to those only who receive them at his hand, to celebrate the mystery in the manner which he enjoins; while to those who at their own hand pervert them to a different purpose, and so have not the promise, there remains nothing but their own dream.

Lastly, we have revived the practice of explaining the doctrine and unfolding the mystery to the people; whereas, formerly, the priest not only used a strange tongue, but muttered in a whisper the words by which he pretended to consecrate the bread and wine. Here our censors have nothing to carp at, unless it be at our having simply followed the command of Christ. For he did not by a tacit exorcism command the bread to become his body, but with clear voice declared to his apostles that he gave them his body.

At the same time, as in the case of Baptism, so also in the case of the Lord's Supper, we explain to the people faithfully, and as carefully as we can, its end, efficacy, advantages, and use. First, we entreat all to come with faith, that by means of it they may inwardly discern the thing which is visibly

represented, viz., the spiritual food by which alone their souls are nourished unto life eternal. We hold, that in this ordinance the Lord does not promise or exhibit by signs, any thing which he does not exhibit in reality; and we, therefore, preach that the body and blood of Christ are both offered to us in the Supper and received by us. Nor do we thus teach, that the bread and wine are symbols, without immediately adding, that there is a truth which is conjoined with them, and which they represent. We are not silent in proclaiming what, and how excellent the fruit is which thence redounds to us, and how noble the pledge of life and salvation which our consciences therein receive. None, indeed, who have any candour will deny that with us, this solemn ordinance is much more clearly explained, and its dignity more fully extolled, than is ever done elsewhere.

In the government of the church we do not differ from others in any thing for which we cannot give a most sufficient reason. The pastoral office we have restored, both according to the apostolic rule, and the practice of the primitive church, by insisting that every one who rules in the church shall also teach. We hold that none are to be continued in the office but those who are diligent in performing its duties. In selecting them our advice has been, that more care and religion should be exercised, and we have ourselves studied so to act. It is well known what kind of ex-

amination bishops exercise by means of their suffragans or vicars, and we might even be able to conjecture what its nature is from the fruit which it produces. It is needless to observe how many lazy and good-for-nothing persons they every where promote to the honour of the priesthood. Among us, should some ministers be found of no great learning, still none is admitted who is not at least tolerably apt to teach. That all are not more perfect is to be imputed more to the calamity of the times than to us. This, however, is, and always will be, our just boast, that the ministers of our church cannot seem to have been carelessly chosen if they are compared with others. But while we are superior in a considerable degree in the matter of trial and election, in this we particularly excel, that no man holds the pastoral office amongst us without executing its duties. Accordingly, none of our churches is seen unprovided with the ordinary preaching of the word.

As it would shame our adversaries to deny these facts, (for in a matter so clear, what could they gain by the denial?) they quarrel with us, first, concerning the right and power, and, secondly, concerning the form of ordination. They quote ancient canons, which give the superintendence of this matter to the bishops and clergy, and, alleging a constant succession by which this right has been handed down to them, even from the apostles themselves, they deny that it can be lawfully transferred elsewhere. I wish they had, by

their merit, retained a title to this boasted possession. But if we consider, first, the order in which for several ages bishops have been advanced to this dignity, next, the manner in which they conduct themselves in it, and, lastly, the kind of persons whom they are accustomed to ordain, and to whom they commit the government of the churches, we shall see that the succession on which they pride themselves was long ago interrupted. The ancient canons require, that he who is to be admitted to the office of bishop or presbyter, shall previously undergo a strict examination, both as to life and doctrine. Clear evidence of this is extant among the acts of the fourth African Council. Moreover, the magistracy and people had a discretionary power of approving or refusing the individual who was nominated by the clergy, in order that no man might be intruded on the unwilling or not consenting.* “Let him who is to preside over all,” (says Leo, Ep. xc.,) “be elected by all; for he who is appointed, while unknown and unexamined, must of necessity be violently intruded.” Again, (Ep. lxxxvii.) “Let regard be had to the attestation of the honourable, the subscription of the clergy, and the consent of the magistracy and people. Reason permits not any other mode of procedure.” Cyprian also contends for the

* “Porro ejus qui a clero nominatus esset vel recusandi, vel approbandi arbitrium penes populum et magistratum erat; ne quis invitis, aut non consentientibus obtruderetur.”—*Origen*.

very same thing, and, indeed, in stronger terms, affirming it as sanctioned by Divine authority that the priest be elected in presence of the people, before the eyes of all, that he may be approved as fit and worthy by the testimony of all. This rule was in force for a short time while the state of the church was tolerable; for the letters of Gregory are full of passages which show that it was carefully observed in his day.

As the Holy Spirit in Scripture imposes on all bishops the necessity of teaching, so in the ancient church it would have been thought monstrous to nominate a bishop who should not, by his doctrine, demonstrate that he was a pastor also. Nor were they admitted to the office on any other condition. The same rule prevailed in regard to presbyters, each being set apart to a particular parish. Hence those decrees, "Let them not involve themselves in secular affairs, let them not make distant excursions from their churches, let them not be long absent." Then it was enjoined by synodal decrees, that at the ordination of a bishop all the other bishops of the province should assemble, or if that could not be conveniently done, at least three should be present. And the object of this was, that no man might force an entrance by tumult, or creep in by stealth, or insinuate himself by indirect artifices. In the ordination of a presbyter, each bishop admitted a council of his own presbyters. These things, which might be narrated more fully, and confirmed more

accurately in a set discourse, I here only mention in passing, because they afford an easy means of judging how much importance is due to this smoke of succession with which our bishops endeavour to blind us.

They maintain that Christ left as a heritage to the apostles, the sole right of appointing over churches whomsoever they pleased, and they complain that we, in exercising the ministry without their authority, have, with sacrilegious temerity, invaded their province. How do they prove it? Because they have succeeded the apostles in an unbroken series. But is this enough, when all other things are different? It would be ridiculous to say so; they do say it, however. In their elections, no account is taken either of life or doctrine. The right of suffrage has been wrested from the people. Nay, even excluding the rest of the clergy, the dignitaries have drawn the whole power to themselves. The Roman Pontiff, again, wresting it from the provincial Bishops, arrogates it to himself alone. Then, as if they had been appointed to secular dominion, there is nothing they less think of than episcopal duty. In short, while they seem to have entered into a conspiracy not to have any kind of resemblance either to the apostles or the holy fathers of the church, they merely clothe themselves with the pretence that they are descended from them in an unbroken succession; as if Christ had ever enacted it into a law, that whatever might be the conduct of those who presided over the

church, they should be recognised as holding the place of the apostles, or as if the office were some hereditary possession, which transmits alike to the worthy and the unworthy. And then, as is said of the Milesians, they have taken precautions not to admit a single worthy person into their society; or if, perchance, they have unawares admitted him, they do not permit him to remain. It is of the generality I speak. For I deny not that there are a few good men among them, who, however, are either silent from fear, or not listened to. From those, then, who persecute the doctrine of Christ with fire and sword, who permit no man with impunity to speak sincerely of Christ, who, in every possible way, impede the course of truth, who strenuously resist our attempt to raise the church from the distressed condition into which they have brought her, who suspect all those who take a deep and pious interest in the welfare of the church, and either keep them out of the ministry, or, if they have been admitted, thrust them out—from such persons, forsooth, it were to be expected that they would, with their own hands, instal into the office faithful ministers to instruct the people in pure religion!

But, since the sentiment of Gregory has passed into a common proverb, that “those who abuse privilege deserve to lose privilege,” they must either become entirely different from what they are, and select a different sort of persons to govern the church, and

adopt a different method of election, or they must cease to complain that they are improperly and injuriously despoiled of what in justice belonged to them. Or, if they would have me speak it more plainly, they must obtain their bishoprics by different means from those by which they have obtained them; they must ordain others to the office after a different way and manner; and if they wish to be recognised as bishops, they must fulfil their duty of pastorally superintending the people. To entitle them to retain the power of nominating and ordaining, let them restore that just and serious examination of life and doctrine, which has for many ages been obsolete among them. But this one reason ought to be as good as a thousand, viz., that any man, who, by his conduct, shows that he is an enemy of sound doctrine, under whatever name he may present himself, has lost all title to authority in the church. We know what injunctions ancient councils give concerning heretics, and what power they leave them. They certainly in express terms forbid any man to apply to them for ordination. No one, therefore, can lay claim to the right of ordaining, who does not, by purity of doctrine, preserve the unity of the church. Now, we maintain that those who, in the present day, under the name of bishops, preside over churches, not only are not faithful ministers and guardians of sound doctrine, but, on the contrary, its most inveterate enemies. We maintain that their sole aim is, to banish

Christ and the truth of his gospel, and sanction the most pernicious and deadly errors. We maintain that they, not only in word, pertinaciously impugn the true doctrine of godliness, but are infuriated against all who would rescue it from obscurity. Against the many impediments which they throw in the way, we studiously ply our labours in behalf of the church, and for so doing, they expostulate with us as if we were making an illegal incursion into their province.

As to the form or ceremony of ordination, it is, forsooth, a mighty matter about which to molest us. Because with us the hands of priests are not anointed, because we do not blow into their face, because we do not clothe them in white and similar vestments, they think our ordination is not duly performed. But the only ceremony we read of, as used in ancient times, was the laying on of hands. Those other forms are recent, and have nought to recommend them but the exceeding scrupulosity with which they are now generally observed. But what is this to the point? In matters so important, a higher than human authority is required. Hence, as often as the circumstances of the times demand, we are at liberty to change such rites as men have invented without express sanction, while those of more recent introduction are still less to be regarded. They put a chalice and *patina* into the hands of those whom they ordain to be priests. Why? That they may inaugurate them for sacri-

ficings. But by what command? Christ never conferred this function on the apostles, nor did he ever wish it to be undertaken by their successors. It is absurd, therefore, to molest us about the form of ordination, in which we differ not either from the rule of Christ, or the practice of the apostles, or the custom of the ancient church, whereas that form of theirs which they accuse us of neglecting, they are not able to defend by the word of God, by sound reason, or the pretext of antiquity.

On the subject of ecclesiastical regimen, there are laws which we readily adopt, such as are not snares for the conscience, or such as tend to the preservation of common order; but those which had either been tyrannically imposed to hold consciences in bondage, or were more subservient to superstition than to edification, we were forced to abrogate. Now, our enemies first charge us with fastidiousness and undue haste, and, secondly, accuse us of aiming at carnal indulgence, by shaking off the yoke of discipline, and so wantoning as we please. But, as I have already observed, we are by no means averse to the strictest observance of whatever is fitted to ensure that all things be done decently and in order, while, in regard to every single observance which we have abrogated, we refuse not to show cause why it behoved us so to do. Assuredly there is no difficulty in proving that the church laboured exceedingly under a load of human traditions, and

that it was necessary, if her interest was consulted, that this load should be lessened. There is a well known complaint by Augustine, wherein he deplores it as the calamity of his time, that the church which God, in his mercy, wished to be free, was even then so overburdened, that the condition of the Jews was more tolerable, (*Epist. 2, ad Januarium.*) It is probable that since that period the number has increased almost tenfold. Much more has the rigour of observance increased. What, then, if that holy man were now to rise and behold the countless multitude of laws under which miserable consciences groan oppressed? What if, on the other hand, he were to see the strictness with which the observance of them is enforced? Our censurers will, perhaps, object that we might, with Augustine, have lamented over any thing which displeased us, but that we ought not to have applied our hand to the work of correction. This objection is easily refuted. For, even granting that human laws were necessary to be observed, still this pernicious error required to be corrected. As I have said, we deny not that laws enacted with a view to external policy ought to be carefully obeyed, but in regard to the regulation of the conscience, we hold that there is no legislator but God. To Him alone then be reserved this authority, which He claims for himself in many passages of Scripture. In this matter, however, were subverted, first, the honour of God, from which it is impious

to derogate in any degree, and, secondly, genuine liberty of conscience,—a liberty which, as Paul strenuously insists, must not be subjected to the will of men. As it was, therefore, our duty to deliver the consciences of the faithful from the undue bondage in which they were held, so we have taught that they are free and unfettered by human laws, and that this freedom, which was purchased by the blood of Christ, cannot be infringed. If any one thinks we are blamable in this, he must attribute the same blame to Christ and his apostles. I cannot now enumerate the other evils which compelled us to set our face against human traditions. I will mention only two, and I am confident that, after I have mentioned them, all impartial readers will be satisfied. The one is, that as some of these traditions demanded things which it was impossible to perform, their only effect was to lead men to hypocrisy, or plunge them into despair; and the other, that all of them had practically realized what our Saviour rebuked in the Pharisees—they had made the commandments of God of none effect.

I will here adduce examples by which this will be made more clear. There are three things, in particular, for which they are offended with us:—First, that we have given liberty to eat flesh on any day; secondly, that we have permitted marriage to priests; and, thirdly, that we have rejected the secret confession which was made in a priest's ear. Let our opponents answer honestly. Is not

the man who may have tasted flesh on Friday punished more severely than the man who may have spent the whole year in a constant course of lewdness? Is it not deemed a more capital offence in a priest to marry than to be caught a hundred times in adultery? Do they not pardon him who has contemned many of the divine precepts on easier terms than him who may have neglected once a year to confess his sins into the ear of a priest? Is it not monstrous, I ask, that it should seem a slight and venial offence to violate the holy law of God, and that it should be judged an inexpressible crime to transgress the decrees of men? The case, I admit, is not without precedent. For, as I have already observed, the wickedness with which our Saviour charges the Pharisees is, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect through your tradition." (Matthew xv. 6.) Moreover, the arrogance of antichrist of which Paul speaks is, "That he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. ii. 4.) For where is the incomparable majesty of God, after man has been exalted to such a height that his laws take precedence of God's eternal decrees? I omit that an apostle describes the prohibition of meats and of marriage as a doctrine of devils; (1 Tim. iv. 1-3.) That is bad enough; nay, too bad; but the crowning impiety is to set man in a higher rank than God. If they deny the truth of my statement, I appeal to fact.

Then, what are those two laws of celibacy and auricular confession but dire murderers of souls? As all the ministers of their churches vow perpetual chastity, it becomes unlawful for them, ever after, from the terms in which the vow is conceived, to take wives. What, then, if one has not received the gift of continence? "There must be no exception here," is the answer. But experience shows how much better it would have been never to have imposed this yoke upon priests, than to shut them up in a furnace of lust, to burn with a perpetual flame. Our adversaries recount the praises of virginity; they recount also the advantages of celibacy, in order to prove that priests have not been rashly interdicted from marrying. They even talk of it as decent and honourable. But will they by all these things prove the lawfulness of fettering consciences which Christ not only left free and unfettered, but whose freedom he has vindicated by his own authority, and at the price of his own blood? Paul does not presume to do so. (1 Cor. vii. 35.) Whence, then, this new licence? Then, when virginity is extolled to the skies, what has it to do with the celibacy of priests, with whose obscenity the whole air is tainted? If the chastity which they profess in word they also exhibited in deed, then, perhaps, I might allow them to say that it is comely so to do. But when every man knows that the prohibition of marriage is only a license to priests to commit gross sin, with what face, I ask, dare they

make any mention of comeliness? As to those whose infamy is not notorious, that it may not be necessary for me to discuss the matter with them at length, I leave them to the tribunal of God, that they may there talk of their chastity. It will be said that this law is imposed on none but those who vow spontaneously. But what greater necessity can be imagined than that by which they are forced to vow? The condition announced to all is, that not one shall be admitted to the priesthood who has not previously, by vow, bound himself to perpetual celibacy, and that he who has vowed must be forced, even against his will, to perform what he has once undertaken—that no excuse for the contrary can be listened to. Still, they maintain that a celibacy so exacted is voluntary. But, while rhetoricians may be allowed to detail the disadvantages of marriage, and the advantages of celibacy, that, by declaiming on such topics in the schools they may improve their style, nothing they can say will prove the propriety of leading miserable consciences into a deadly snare, in which they must perpetually writhe till they are strangled. And the ridiculous part is, that, amidst all this flagitious turpitude, even hypocrisy finds a place. For, whatever their conduct may be, they deem themselves better than others, for the simple reason that they have no wives. In the same way, in the case of confession, they number up the advantages which follow from it. We, on the contrary, are equally prepared to point

out not a few dangers which are justly to be dreaded, and to refer to numerous most grievous evils which have actually flowed from it. These, I say, are the kind of arguments which both parties may employ. But the perpetual rule of Christ, which cannot be changed or bent in this direction, or in that; nay, which cannot, without impiety, be controverted, is, that conscience must not be brought into bondage. Besides, the law on which our opponents insist is one which can only torture souls, and ultimately destroy them. For it requires every individual to confess all his sins, once a-year, to his own priest; when this is not done, it leaves him no hope of obtaining pardon. It has been experimentally found by those who have made the trial seriously, that is in the true fear of God, that it is not possible thus to confess even a hundredth part of our sins. The consequence was, that not having any mode of extricating themselves, they were driven to despair. Those, again, who desired to satisfy God in a more careless manner, found this confession a most complete cloak for hypocrisy. For, thinking that they obtained an acquittal at the bar of God as soon as they had disgorged their sins into the ear of a priest, they were bold to sin more freely, in consequence of the expeditious mode in which they were disburdened. Then, having in their minds a fixed persuasion that they fulfilled what the law enjoined, they thought that of whatever sort the enumeration might be, it

comprehended all their sins, though, in point of fact, it did not embrace the thousandth part. See, then, on what ground our adversaries vociferate that we have destroyed the discipline of the church,—simply because we have studied to succour miserable consciences when perishing under the pressure of a most cruel tyranny, and dragged hypocrites out of their lurking places into the open face of day, that they might both examine themselves more closely, and begin to have a better idea of the Divine justice, which they formerly evaded.

But some one will say, that however numerous the abuses, and however deserving of correction, still laws, in other respects sacred and useful, and in a manner consecrated by a high antiquity, ought not to have been thus abolished instantly and altogether.

In regard to the eating of flesh, my simple answer is, that the doctrine we hold accords with that of the ancient church, in which we know that it was free to eat flesh at all times, or to abstain from it.

The prohibition of the marriage of priests I admit to be ancient, as is also the vow of perpetual continence, taken by nuns and monks. But if they concede that the declared will of God outweighs human custom, why, when perfectly aware that the will of God is with us, and clearly supports our view, do they seek to quarrel with us about antiquity? The doctrine of Scripture is clear, “Marriage is honourable in all.” (Heb. xiii. 4.) Paul expressly speaks of Bishops as hus-

bands. (1 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i. 6.) As a general rule, he enjoins marriage on all of a particular temperament, and classes the interdiction of marriage among the "doctrines of devils." (1 Tim. iv. 3.) What avails it to set human custom in opposition to the clear declarations of the Holy Spirit, unless it be to prefer men to God? And it is of importance to observe how unfair judges they are, who, in this matter, allege against us the practice of the ancient church. Is there any antiquity of the church, either earlier, or of higher authority, than the days of the Apostles? But our opponents will not deny, that at that time marriage was permitted to all the ministers of the church, and used by them. If the apostles were of opinion that priests ought to be restrained from marrying, why did they defraud the church of so great a boon? Yet, after them, about two hundred and fifty years elapsed, until the Council of Nice, when, as Sozomen relates, the question of enjoining celibacy on ministers was agitated, but by the interference of Paphnutius, the whole affair went off. For it is related, that after he, being himself a bachelor, had declared that a law of celibacy was not to be tolerated, the whole council readily assented to his opinion. But superstition gradually increasing, the law, which was then repudiated, was at length enacted. Among those canons, which, as well from their antiquity, as the uncertainty of their author, bear the name of apostolical, there is one

which does not permit any clerical persons, except singers and readers, to marry, after they have been admitted to office. But by a previous canon, priests and deacons are prohibited from putting away their wives under the pretext of religion. And in the fourth canon of the Gangrene Council, anathema is pronounced against those who made a difference between a married and an unmarried clergyman, and on that account kept away from his diet of service. Hence it appears that there was still in those times considerably more equity than a subsequent age manifested. Here, however, it was not my intention to discuss this subject fully. I only thought it proper to indicate in passing, that the primitive and purer church is not in this matter so adverse to us as our enemies pretend. But grant that it is, why do they accuse us as fiercely as if we were confounding things sacred and profane; or as if we could not easily retort against them, that we accord far better with the ancient church than they do? Marriage, which the ancients denied to priests, we make free. What do they say to the licentiousness which has every where obtained among them? They will deny that they approve it. But if they were desirous to obey the ancient canons, it would become them to chastise it more severely. The punishment which the Council of Cesarea inflicts on a presbyter who married was deposition, but one guilty of adultery or fornication it punishes far more severely, adding to deposi-

tion excommunication also. In the present day, the marriage of a priest is deemed a capital crime, while for his hundred acts of whoredom he is mulcted in a small sum of money. Doubtless, if those who first passed the law of celibacy were now alive, instructed by present experience, they would be the first to abrogate it. However, as I have already said, it would be the height of injustice to condemn us on the authority of men, in a matter in which we are openly acquitted by the voice of God.

With regard to confession, we have a briefer and readier defence. Our opponents cannot show that the necessity of confessing was imposed earlier than Innocent III. For twelve hundred years this tyranny, for which they contend with us so keenly, was unknown to the Christian world. But there is a decree of the Lateran Council. True, but of the same description as many others. Those who have any tolerable knowledge of history are aware of, at once, the ignorance and the ferocity of those times. This, indeed, is in accordance with the common observation, that the most ignorant governors are always the most imperious. But all pious souls will bear me witness, in what a maze those must be entangled who think themselves obliged by that law. To this cruel torturing of consciences has been added the blasphemous presumption of making it essential to the remission of sin. For they pretend that none obtain pardon from God but

those who are disposed to confess. What is this, pray, but for men to prescribe at their own hand the mode in which a sinner is reconciled to God—God offering pardon simply, while they withhold it until a condition which they have added shall have been fulfilled? On the other hand, the people were possessed with this most pernicious superstition, viz., that as soon as they had disburdened themselves of their sins, by pouring them into the ear of a priest, they were completely freed from guilt. This opinion many abused to a more unrestrained indulgence in sin, while even those who were more influenced by the fear of God paid greater regard to priests than to Him. That public and solemn acknowledgment, (*exomologesis*, as Cyprian calls it,) which penitents were anciently obliged to make when they were to be reunited to the church, there is no sane man who does not commend and willingly adopt, provided it be not stretched to some other end than that for which it was instituted. In short, we have no controversy in this matter with the ancient church; we only wish, as we ought, to free the necks of believers of a modern tyranny of recent date. Besides, when any person, with the view of obtaining consolation and counsel, visits his minister in private, and familiarly deposits in his breast the causes of his anxiety, we by no means object, provided it is done freely, and not of constraint. Let every man, I say, be left at liberty to do in this matter what he feels to

be expedient for himself; let no man's conscience be tied down by fixed laws.

This apology will, I hope, prove as satisfactory to your Imperial Majesty, and to you, Most Illustrious Princes, as it is eminently just.

But how deservedly soever we complain that the doctrine of truth was corrupted, and the whole body of Christianity sullied by numerous defects, still our censurers deny that this was cause sufficient for so disturbing the church, and in a manner convulsing the whole world. We on our parts are not so stupid as not to perceive how desirable it is to avoid public tumults, nor so savage as not to be touched, and even to shudder in our inmost soul, on beholding the troubled condition in which the church now is. But with what fairness is the blame of existing commotions imputed to us, when they have not been, in the least degree, excited by us? Nay, with what face is the crime of disturbing the church laid to our charge by the very persons who obviously are the authors of all these disturbances? This is just the case of the wolves complaining of the lambs.

When Luther at first appeared, he merely touched, with a gentle hand, a few abuses of the grossest description, now grown intolerable. And he did it with a modesty which intimated that he had more desire to see them corrected, than determination to correct them himself. The opposite party forthwith sounded to arms, and when the contention was

more and more inflamed, our enemies deemed it the best and shortest method to suppress the truth by cruelty and violence. Accordingly, when our people challenged them to friendly discussion, and desired to settle disputes by calm arguments, they were cruelly persecuted with sanguinary edicts, until matters have been brought to the present miserable pass.

Nor is the calumny which blames us for these distractions, without precedent. With the very same charge which we are now forced to hear, wicked Ahab once upbraided Elijah, viz. that he was the disturber of Israel. But the holy Prophet by his reply acquitted us: "I," says he, "have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." (1 Kings xviii. 17, 18.) It is unfair, therefore, to load us with odium on account of the fierce contest concerning religion which this day rages in Christendom, unless, indeed, it be thought proper first to condemn Elijah, with whom we have a common defence. His sole excuse is, that he had fought only to vindicate the glory and restore the pure worship of God, and he retorts the charge of exciting contention and disturbances upon those who stirred up tumults as a means of resisting the truth. And what is it that we have done hitherto, and what do we even now, but strive that the one God may be worshipped amongst us, and that his simple truth may reign in the

church? If our adversaries deny this, let them, at least, convict us of impious doctrine before they charge it upon us as a fault that we dissent from others. For what were we to do? The only terms on which we could purchase peace, were to betray the truth of God by silence. Though, indeed, it would not have been enough to be silent, unless we had also by tacit consent approved of impious doctrine, of open blasphemies against God, and the most degrading superstitions. What else, then, at the very least, could we do, than testify with a clear voice that we had no fellowship with impiety? We have therefore simply studied to do what was our duty. That matters have blazed forth into such hostile strife is an evil, the blame of which must rest with those who chose to confound heaven and earth, rather than give a place to pious and sound doctrine—their object being, by whatever means, to keep possession of the tyranny which they had usurped.

It ought to be sufficient, and more than sufficient, for our defence, that the sacred truth of God, in asserting which we sustain so many contests, is on our side, whereas our adversaries, in contending with us, war not so much against us as against God himself. Then it is not of our own accord that we engage in this fervour of contention. It is their intemperance which has dragged us into it against our expectation. Let the result then have been what it may, there is no reason why we should be loaded with hatred. For as it is

not ours to govern events, neither is it ours to prevent them. But there is an ancient practice which the wicked have resorted to in all ages, viz., to take occasion from the preaching of the gospel to excite tumult, and then to defame the gospel as the cause of dissension—dissension which, even in the absence of opportunity, they wickedly and eagerly court. And, as in the primitive church, the prophecy behoved to be fulfilled, that Christ should be to his own countrymen a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, so it is not surprising if the same thing holds true in our time also. It may well indeed be thought strange for the builders to reject the stone which ought to occupy the principal place in the foundation, but as this happened at the beginning in the case of Christ, let it not surprise us that it is also a common event in the present day. Here I entreat your Imperial Majesty, and you, Most Illustrious Princes, that as oft as this unhappy rending of the church, and the other countless evils which have sprung from dissension, either occur to your own thoughts, or are suggested by others, you would at the same time call to mind, that Christ has been set up as a sign to be spoken against, and that his gospel, wherever it is preached, instantly inflames the rage and resistance of the wicked. Then, from conflict a shock must necessarily ensue. Hence the uniform fate of the gospel, from its first commencement, has been, and always will be, even unto the end, to be preached in the

world amid great contention. But it is the part of the prudent to consider from what source the evil springs. Whoever does this will readily free us from all blame. It certainly behoved us to bear testimony to the truth, as we have done. Wo to the world if it chooses to challenge Christ to combat rather than embrace the peace which He offers! The man who will not bear to be corrected, will undoubtedly be crushed by Him.

But here again it is objected, that all the corruptions of the church are not to be corrected by such harsh remedies—that they are not to be cut in to the quick—that not even is medicine to be applied to all, but some are to be treated gently, and others submitted to,* if they cannot without difficulty be removed. I answer, that we are not so unacquainted with ordinary life as not to know that the church always has been, and always will be, liable to some defects which the pious are indeed bound to disapprove, but which are to be borne rather than be made a cause of fierce contention. But our adversaries are unjust when they accuse us of being excessively morose, as if we had brought the church into trouble on account of small and trivial errors. For to their other misrepresentations they add this one also, of endeavouring, by every artifice in their power, to extenuate the importance of the things which we have made the subject of controversy, the object being to make it seem that we have been hurried on

by a love of quarrelling, and not that we were drawn into it by a just cause. This they do, not in ignorance, but with cunning design, namely, because they know that there is nothing more odious than the rash haste which they impute to us. And yet they, at the same time, betray their own impiety in speaking so contemptuously of matters of the greatest moment. And is it indeed so, that when we complain that the worship of God was profaned—that His honour was utterly impaired—that the doctrine of salvation was entangled with numerous destructive errors—that the virtue of Christ's death was suppressed—and that, in short, all things sacred were sacrilegiously polluted; is it indeed so, that we are to be derided and charged with the folly of disturbing ourselves and the whole world besides, to no purpose, with disputes about insignificant questions?

But as a cursory glance at these things is not sufficient, it will now be necessary more diligently to explain to you the dignity and importance of the points in dispute, so as to make it manifest, not only that they were not unworthy of notice, but that we could not possibly overlook them without involving ourselves in the greatest guilt, and becoming chargeable with impious perfidy towards God. This is the third of the three heads, of which at the outset I proposed to treat.

First, then, I wish to know, with what face they can call themselves Christians, when they charge us with rashly disturbing the

church with disputes about matters of no importance. For, if they set as much value on the Christian religion as the ancient idolaters did on their superstitions, they would not speak so contemptuously of zeal for its preservation, but, in imitation of idolaters, would give it the precedence of all other cares and business. For, when idolaters spoke of fighting for their altars and their hearths, they alleged what they believed to be the best and strongest of all causes. Our opponents, on the contrary, regard as almost superfluous a contest which is undertaken for the glory of God and the salvation of men. For it is not true, as has been alleged, that we dispute about a worthless shadow. The whole substance of the Christian religion is brought into question. Were nothing else involved, is the eternal and inviolable truth of God, that truth to which he rendered so many illustrious testimonies, in confirming which so many holy prophets and so many martyrs met their death, truth heralded and witnessed by the Son of God himself, and ultimately sealed with his blood, is that truth of so little value, that it may be trampled under foot, while we look on and are silent?

But I descend to particulars. We know how execrable a thing idolatry is in the sight of God, and history abounds with narratives of the dreadful punishments with which he visited it, both in the Israelitish people and in other nations. From his own mouth, we hear the same vengeance denounc-

ed against all succeeding ages. For he speaks to us also when he swears by his holy name, that he will not suffer his glory to be transferred to idols, and when he declares that he is a jealous God, taking vengeance, to the third and fourth generation, upon all sins, and more especially on this one. This is the sin on account of which Moses, who was otherwise of so meek a temper, being inflamed by the Spirit of God, ordered the Levites "to go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour," (Exod. xxxii. 27;) the sin on account of which God so often punished his chosen people, afflicting them with sword, pestilence, and famine, and, in short, all kinds of calamity; the sin on account of which, especially, the kingdom, first of Israel, and then of Judah, was laid waste, Jerusalem the holy city destroyed, the temple of God (the only temple then existing in the world) laid in ruins, and the people whom he had selected out of all the nations of the earth to be peculiarly his own, entering into covenant with them, that they alone might bear his standard, and live under his rule and protection—the people, in short, from whom Christ was to spring, were doomed to all kinds of disaster, stript of all dignity, driven into exile, and brought to the brink of destruction. It were too long here to give a full detail, for there is not a page in the prophets which does not proclaim aloud that there is

nothing which more provokes the divine indignation. What, then, when we saw idolatry openly and every where stalking abroad, were we to connive at it? To have done so would have just been to rock the world in its sleep of death that it might not awake.

Be pleased, Most Invincible Cæsar, and Most Illustrious Princes, to call to mind the many corruptions by which, as I have already shown, the worship of God was polluted, and you will assuredly find that impiety had broken out like a deluge, under which religion was completely submerged. Hence divine honours were paid to images, and prayers every where offered to them, under the pretence that the power and deity of God resided in them. Hence, too, dead saints were worshipped exactly in the manner in which of old the Israelites worshipped Baalim. And by the artifice of Satan, numerous other modes had been devised by which the glory of God was torn to pieces. The Lord exclaims, that he burns with jealousy when any idol is erected, and Paul demonstrates, by his own example, that his servant should be zealous in asserting his glory. (Acts xvii. 16.) It is no common zeal for the house of God which ought to penetrate and engross the hearts of believers. When, therefore, the divine glory was polluted, or rather lacerated, in so many ways, would it not have been perfidy if we had winked or been silent? A dog, seeing any violence offered to his master, will instantly bark; could we, in silence, see the

sacred name of God dishonoured so blasphemously? In such a case, how could it have been said, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me?" (Psal. lxi. 9.)

The mockery which worships God with nought but external gestures and absurd human fictions, how could we, without sin, allow to pass unrebuked? We know how much he hates hypocrisy, and yet in that fictitious worship, which was every where in use, hypocrisy reigned. We hear how bitter the terms in which the prophets inveigh against all worship fabricated by human rashness. But a good intention, *i. e.* an insane license of daring whatever man pleased, was deemed the perfection of worship. For it is certain that in the whole body of worship which had been established, there was scarcely a single observance which had an authoritative sanction from the word of God. We are not in this matter to stand either by our own or by other men's judgments. We must listen to the voice of God, and hear in what estimation he holds that profanation of worship which is displayed when men, overleaping the boundaries of his word, run riot in their own inventions. The reasons which He assigns for punishing the Israelites with blindness, after they had lost the pious and holy discipline of the church, are two, *viz.*, the prevalence of hypocrisy and *will-worship*—meaning thereby a form of worship contrived by man.—"Forasmuch," saith he, "as

this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men; therefore I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." (Isa. xxix. 13, 14.) When God stirred up our reformers, a similar or worse perversity openly domineered throughout the church. While God, then, was thundering from heaven, were we to sit quiet?

Perhaps they will consider as a trivial error the custom which prevailed, in defiance of the clear prohibition of God, of repeating the public prayers in an unknown tongue. But since it is manifest that by such procedure God was mocked, they cannot deny that we had too good cause to object to it. Then, what shall I say of the blasphemies which rung in the public hymns, and which no pious man is able to hear without the utmost horror? We all know the epithets which they applied to Mary—styling her the gate of heaven, hope, life, and salvation; and to such a degree of infatuation and madness had they proceeded, that they even gave her a right to order Christ! For still in many churches is heard the execrable and impious stanza, "Ask the Father; command the Son." In terms in no respect more modest do they celebrate certain of the saints, and these, too,

saints of their own making, *i. e.* individuals whom they, on their own judgment, have admitted into the catalogue of saints. For, among the multitude of praises which they sing to Claud, they call him "the light of the blind," "the life and resurrection of the dead." The forms of prayer in daily use are stuffed with similar blasphemies. The Lord denounced the severest threatenings against those who, either in oaths or in prayers, confounded his name with Baalim. What vengeance, then, impends over our heads when we not only confound him with saints as minor gods, but with signal insult rob Christ of the proper and peculiar titles with which he is distinguished, in order that we may bestow them on creatures? Were we to be silent here also, and by perfidious silence call down his heavy judgments?

I say nothing of the fact that no man prayed, and that indeed no man could pray, to God with firm faith, *i. e.* in good earnest. For Christ being, in a manner, buried, the necessary consequence was, that men were always in doubt whether God had a Father's kindness toward them—whether he was disposed to assist them—and whether he took any interest in their salvation. What! was it an error either trivial or tolerable, when the eternal priesthood of Christ, as if it had been set up to be preyed upon, was bestowed, without distinction, on any individual among the saints? Let us remember that Christ, by his death, purchased for himself the hon-

our of being the eternal advocate and peacemaker to present our prayers and our persons to the Father; to obtain supplies of grace for us, and enable us to hope we shall obtain what we ask. As he alone died for us, and redeemed us by his death, so he admits of no partnership in this honour. Therefore, what fouler blasphemy than that which is ever and anon in the mouths of our opponents, viz., that Christ is indeed the only mediator of redemption, but that all the saints are mediators of intercession? Is not Christ in this way left inglorious, as if, after having once in his death performed the office of priest, he had ever after resigned it to the saints? Are we then to be silent when the peculiar dignity of Christ, the dignity which cost him such a price, is wrested from him with the greatest contumely, and distributed among the saints, as if it were lawful spoil? But it seems that when they speak thus they do not deny that Christ intercedes for us even now; only we must understand that he does it along with the saints, *i. e.*, just as any other one in the catalogue. It must have been a mighty honour which Christ purchased for himself by his blood, if all he obtained was to be the associate of Hugo, Lubin, or some of the merest dregs of saintship which the Roman Pontiff has conferred at discretion. For the question is not, whether these even do pray, (this being a subject of which it is better to have no knowledge, as Scripture does not mention it,) but the question is,

whether, after passing by Christ, or treating him with neglect, or positively abandoning him altogether, we are entitled to look round for the patronage of saints; or, if they will have it in plainer terms, whether Christ is the only priest who opens up an asylum for us in heaven, leads us thither by the hand, and by his intercession induces the Father to listen to our prayers, so that we ought to cast ourselves entirely on his advocacy, and present our prayers in his name; or whether, on the contrary, he holds this office in common with the saints.

I have shown above that Christ was in a great measure defrauded, not of the honour of the priesthood merely, but also of the gratitude due for his benefits. True, he is called a Redeemer, but in a manner which implies that men also, by their own free will, redeem themselves from the bondage of sin and death. True, he is called righteousness and salvation, but so that men still procure salvation for themselves, by the merit of their works; for this inestimable gift, which no eloquence of men or angels is able adequately to describe, the schoolmen are not ashamed to restrict, telling us that though he confers the first merit, *i. e.* as they explain it, the occasion of meriting, yet after receiving this help, we merit eternal life by our own works. True, they confess that we are washed from our sins by the blood of Christ, but so that ever after this washing, every individual cleanses himself. True, the death of Christ receives

the name of a sacrifice, but so that sins are expiated by the daily sacrifices of men. True, Christ is said to have reconciled us to the Father, but with this reservation, that men buy off the punishments which they owe to the justice of God. When supplementary aid is sought from the benefit of the keys, no more honour is paid to Christ than to Cyprian or Cyricius. For, in making up the treasury of the church, the merits of Christ and of martyrs are thrown together in the lump. In all these things, have we not just as many execrable blasphemies as we have words, blasphemies by which the glory of Christ is rent, and torn to shreds? For being in a great measure despoiled of his honour, he retains the name, while he wants the power. Here, too, no doubt, we might have been silent, though we saw the Son, on whom the Father hath bestowed all authority, and power, and glory, and in whom alone he bids us glory, so classified with his servants, that he had scarcely any pre-eminence above them. When we saw his benefits thus in oblivion—when we saw his efficacy defeated by the ingratitude of men—when we saw the price of his blood held in no estimation, and the fruits of his death almost annihilated—when, in fine, we saw him so deformed by the false and profane opinions of men, that he bore more resemblance to an unsubstantial phantom than to himself, did it behove us to bear it calmly and silently? O accursed patience, if, when the honour of God is im-

paired, not to say prostrated, we are so slightly affected, that we can wink and pass on! O ill bestowed benefits of Christ, if we can permit the memory of them to be thus suppressed by impious blasphemies!

I again return to the second branch of Christian doctrine.

Who can deny that men are labouring under a kind of delirium, when they suppose that they procure eternal life by the merit of their works? I admit that they conjoin the grace of God with their works, but in as much as their confidence of obtaining acceptance is made to depend on their own worthiness, it is clear that the ground of their confidence and boasting lies in their works. The trite and favourite doctrine of the schools, the opinion deeply seated in almost all minds, is—that every individual is loved by God in exact proportion to his deserts. Entertaining this view, are not souls, by means of a confidence which the devil inspires, raised to a height, from which, as from a loftier precipice, they are afterwards plunged into the gulf of despair? Again, when they pretend to merit the favour of God, it is not merely by true obedience, but by frivolous observances, of no value. The meritorious works to which the first place is assigned are these—to mumble over a multitude of little prayers, to erect altars and set up images, statues, or pictures upon them—to frequent churches, and run up and down from one church to

another—to hear many masses and to buy some—to wear out their bodies, by I know not what abstinences—abstinences having nothing in common with Christian fasting; and, in particular, to be most careful in observing the traditions of men. In the matter of satisfactions, is it not even a greater infatuation which makes them, after the manner of the heathen, set out in quest of expiations, by which they may reconcile themselves to God? After all these attempts, after great and long fatigue, had they any profit? Doing every thing with a dubious and trembling conscience, they were always exposed to that fearful anxiety, or rather that dire torment, of which I have already spoken, because they were enjoined to doubt whether their persons and their works were not hateful to God. Confidence being in this way overthrown, the necessary consequence was, as Paul declares, that the promise of the eternal inheritance was made void. In such circumstances, what became of the salvation of men? The necessity of crying aloud being thus laid upon us, had we kept silence, we should have been not only ungrateful and treacherous towards God, but also cruel towards men, over whom we saw eternal destruction impending, if they were not brought back into the proper path.

Were a dog to see an injury offered to his master, equal to the insult which is offered to God in the sacraments, he would instantly give the alarm, and expose his own life to danger, sooner than silently allow his master

to be so maltreated. Ought we to show less devotedness to God than a brute is wont to show to man? I say nothing of the fact that rites, founded merely on human authority, have been put on a footing with the mysteries instituted by Christ, and recommended by his divine authority, though the procedure is deserving of the severest rebuke. But when the mysteries themselves were thus corrupted by the many superstitions, and dishonoured by the many false opinions, to which we have already adverted, was it a thing that we ought to have tolerated, or pretended not to see? Christ with a whip drove the money-changers out of the temple, threw down their tables, and scattered their merchandise. I admit it is not lawful for every man to take the whip into his own hand, but it is incumbent on all who professedly belong to Christ to burn with the zeal with which Christ was animated, when he vindicated the glory of his Father. Therefore, that profanation of the temple, at which he, in a manner so marked, expressed his strong displeasure, it is at least our part to condemn in a free, firm, and decided tone. Who is ignorant that sacraments have now for a long time been sold in churches, as openly as the wares which stand exposed in the public market? Other rites, too, have their fixed price, while as to some a bargain is not struck till after long higgling.

But since the instances which are exhibited in the Lord's Supper are manifest, and of a

nature more heinous than in the case of other rites, come and say with what conscience could we have connived at profanations of it, at once so numerous and so blasphemous? Seeing that even now I want words to express them, with what justice are we charged with excessive vehemence in our invectives? By the sacred body of Christ, which hung in sacrifice for us, by the holy blood which he shed for our ablution, I here beseech your Imperial Majesty, and you, Most Illustrious Princes, that you will be pleased seriously to consider how great must be the mystery in which that body is set before us for meat, and that blood for drink; to consider how carefully, how religiously, it ought to be kept unpolluted. What ingratitude then must it be when this heavenly mystery, which Christ has committed to us, like a most precious jewel, is trodden under foot of swine, for any man to look on, and be silent? But we may see it not only trodden, but also defiled by every species of pollution. What an insult was offered, when the efficacy of Christ's death was transferred to a theatrical performance by men—when some priestling, as if he had been the successor of Christ, interposed himself as a Mediator between God and man—when, after destroying the virtue of the only sacrifice, a thousand sacrifices of expiation were daily offered in a single city—when Christ was sacrificed ten thousand times a day, as if he had not done enough in once dying for us? In heaping all these insults

upon Christ, they abused the character of the Holy Supper, for they are all included in this single notion of sacrifice. I am not ignorant of the glosses which our opponents employ, in order to screen their absurdities. Up to the present age, they impudently practised all the abominations to which I have referred, but being now detected, they burrow in new holes, without being able, however, to hide their turpitude. They taught that the mass was a sacrifice, by which the sins not only of the living, but also of the dead, were expiated. What do they now gain by quibbling, except it be to betray their effrontery? How deeply, too, is the sacrament polluted, when, instead of the open preaching of the word, which constitutes its legitimate consecration, a charm is wrought with the bread by means of whiffs and whispers? When, instead of being distributed among the assembly of the faithful, it is devoured apart by one man, or set aside for another's use? And when, even in the case where a kind of distribution is made, the people are, in defiance of the clear injunction of our Lord, defrauded of the half, I mean the cup? How shameful to see a trade in masses plied as unblushingly as a trade in shoes! For if it is true, as they say, that the thing they vend is the merit of Christ's death, the insult which they offer to Christ is not less gross than if they spat in his face.

Be pleased, Most Invincible Emperor, and Most Illustrious Princes, to call to mind the

disaster which of old befel the Corinthians on account of one, and that, at first sight, not so very heinous an abuse of this sacrament. Each brought from home his own supper, not as a common contribution, but that the rich might feast luxuriously while the poor hungered. For this cause the Lord chastised them with a severe and deadly pestilence. Such is the account of Paul, who, at the same time, bids us regard it as a paternal rod, by which the Lord trained them to repentance. From this infer what we have to expect who have not declined merely in some little iota from the genuine institution of Christ, but wandered to an immeasurable distance from it; who have not only corrupted its purity in one instance, but defaced it in numerous instances, and these, too, of a shocking description; who have not merely interfered with its legitimate end by some single abuse, but entirely perverted the form of its administration. Nor can it be doubted, that now for some time God has begun to avenge this impiety. Now, for many years in succession, the world has been pressed by numerous varying troubles and calamities, until it has at length arrived at almost the extreme of wretchedness. We, indeed, stand amazed at our disasters, or suggest other reasons why God so afflicts us. But if we reflect how slight the error by which the Corinthians had vitiated the sacred Supper was, if contrasted with all the defilements by which, in the present day, it is sullied and polluted amongst ourselves, it is

strange not to perceive that God, who so severely punished them, is justly in a much higher degree offended with us.

Were I to follow out all the flagitious corruptions of ecclesiastical government, I should enter an interminable forest. Of the lives of the priests, for many reasons, I at present decline to speak; but there are three vices of an intolerable description, on which each individual may reflect for himself: *First*, Disregarding the character of a holy vocation, clerical offices are everywhere acquired either by violence or by simony, or by other dishonest and impious arts: *Secondly*, The rulers of the church, in so far as regards the performance of their duties, are more like empty shadows or lifeless images than true ministers; and, *Thirdly*, When they ought to govern consciences in accordance with the word of God, they oppress them with an iniquitous tyranny, and hold them in bondage by the fetters of many impious laws. Is it true, that, not only in contempt of the laws of God and man, but in the absence of everything like a sense of shame, foul disorder reigns in the appointment of Bishops and Presbyters? that caprice assumes the place of justice, simony is seldom absent, and, as if these were evils of no consequence, the correction of them is deferred to a future age? What is become of the duty of teaching—the proper characteristic of the ministry? As to true liberty of conscience, we know how many struggles Paul engaged in,

and how earnestly he contended in its defence ; but every person who judges impartially must certainly perceive that at the present time we have much more cause to contend for it. In a corruption of sound doctrine so extreme, in a pollution of the sacraments so nefarious, in a condition of the church so deplorable, those who maintain that we ought not to have felt so strongly, would have been satisfied with nothing less than a perfidious tolerance, by which we should have betrayed the worship of God, the glory of Christ, the salvation of men, the entire administration of the sacraments, and the government of the church. There is something specious in the name of moderation, and tolerance is a quality which has a fair appearance, and seems worthy of praise ; but the rule which we must observe at all hazards is, never to endure patiently that the sacred name of God should be assailed with impious blasphemy—that his eternal truth should be suppressed by the devil's lies—that Christ should be insulted, his holy mysteries polluted, unhappy souls cruelly murdered, and the church left to writhe in extremity under the effect of a deadly wound. This would be not meekness, but indifference about things to which all others ought to be postponed.

I trust I have now clearly shown, as I proposed, that, in correcting the corruption of the church, we have by no means been more urgent than the case demanded. Even those

who blame us are aware of this, and, accordingly, they have recourse to another charge, viz., that the utmost we have gained by our interference has been to fill the Christian world, which was formerly at peace, with intestine discord—that so far from any amendment appearing, things have gone on to worse—that of those who have embraced our doctrine few have been made better, nay, that some have been emboldened, if not to greater, at least to more unrestrained licentiousness. They object, moreover, that in our churches there is no discipline, no laws of abstinence, no exercise of humility, that the people, thrown loose from the yoke, riot with impunity in vicious courses. Lastly, they throw upon us the odium of seizing on the property of ecclesiastics, asserting that our princes have made a rush upon it as if it had been lawful spoil, that in this way the church has been violently and shamefully plundered, and that now the patrimony of the church is possessed indiscriminately by those who, amid the uproar of contention, have usurped it without law or any proper title.

I, for my part, deny not that when impiety reigned, her kingdom was disturbed by us. But if, at the moment when the light of sound and pious doctrine beamed upon the world, all, as in duty bound, had spontaneously, and with ready mind, lent their aid, there would at the present day be no less peace and quietness in all the churches, than in the days when antichrist tyrannized. Let those who,

it is manifest, impede the course of truth, desist from waging war with Christ, and there will instantly be perfect concord, or let them desist from throwing upon us the blame of dissensions, which they themselves excite. For it is certainly most unfair, while they refuse all terms of peace unless antichrist be permitted, after putting the doctrine of piety to flight, and as it were again consigning Christ to the tomb, to subjugate the church, it is most unfair not only to boast as if they themselves were innocent, but also to insult over us; and that we who desire nothing else than unity, and whose only bond of union is the eternal truth of God, should bear all the blame and odium, as much as if we were the authors of dissension. In regard to the allegation, that no fruit has been produced by our doctrine, I am well aware that profane men deride us, and allege that in probing sores which are incurable, we only enlarge the ulcer. For their opinion is, that the desperate condition of the church makes it vain to attempt remedies, there being no hope of cure; and they hence conclude that the best course is not to meddle with an evil after it has once made good its ground. Those who speak in this way understand not that the restoration of the church is the work of God, and no more depends on the hopes and opinions of men, than the resurrection of the dead, or any other miracle. Here, therefore, we are not to wait for facility of action, either from the will of men, or the

temper of the times, but must rush forward through the midst of despair. It is the will of our Master that his gospel be preached. Let us obey his command, and follow whithersoever he calls. What the success will be it is not ours to inquire. Our only duty is to wish for what is best, and beseech it of the Lord in prayer; to strive with all zeal, solicitude, and diligence, to bring about the desired result, and at the same time to submit with patience to whatever that result may be.

Groundless, therefore, is the charge brought against us of not having done all the good which we wished, and which was to be desired. God bids us plant and water. We have done so. He alone gives the increase. What, then, if he chooses not to give according to our wish? If it is clear that we have faithfully done our part, let not our adversaries require more of us: if the result is unfavourable, let them expostulate with God. But the pretence that no benefit has resulted from our doctrine is altogether false. I say nothing of the correction of external idolatry, and of numerous superstitions and errors; though that is not to be counted of no moment. But is there no fruit in this, that many who are truly pious feel their obligation to us, in that they have at length learned to worship God with a pure heart, and to invoke him with a calm conscience, have been freed from perpetual torments, and furnished with true delight in Christ, so as to be able to confide in him? But if we are

asked for proofs which every eye can see, it has not fared so unhappily with us that we cannot point to numerous sources of rejoicing. How many who formerly led a vicious course of life have been so reformed as to seem converted into new men! How many whose past lives had been free from censure, nay, who were held in the highest estimation, have, instead of retrograding, been able to testify by their conduct that our ministry has proved neither barren nor unfruitful! Our enemies, no doubt, have it in their power to traduce and lacerate us by their calumnies, especially among the ignorant; but this they can never wrest from us, viz., that in those who have embraced our doctrine, greater innocence, integrity, and true holiness, are found, than in all who among them are deemed of greatest excellence. But if there are any, (and we confess the number is but too great,) who pervert the gospel by giving loose reins to their passions, the circumstance, assuredly, is not new, and if it was, how can we be made to bear the blame of it? It is admitted that the gospel is the only rule of a good and holy life; but in the fact that men do not universally submit to be ruled by it, and that some, as if set free from restraint, even sin more presumptuously, we recognise the truth of Simeon's saying, that Christ "is set up, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." (Luke ii. 35.) If God sees meet to kindle the light of the gospel in order that the hidden iniquity of the wicked may be

exposed, out of this to concoct a charge against the ministers of the gospel, and their preaching, is the utmost stretch of malice and effrontery. But I do them no injury when I retort upon them the very thing out of which they attempt to rear up a charge against us. For where do the despisers of God learn their daring licentiousness, except it be from imagining, amid the uproar of dissensions, that there is nothing which they are not licensed to do? In this, therefore, let them recognise it as their own crime, viz., that by retarding the course of truth, they encourage the wicked with hopes of impunity.

As to the vituperative allegation, that we are devoid of discipline and laws, fitted to keep the people under due restraint, we are provided with a twofold answer. Were I to say that discipline is adequately established among us, I should be refuted by the daily discourses, in which our teachers lament that it still lies neglected. But while I deny not that we want the blessing of thorough discipline, still I say it ought to be considered who the persons are to whom it has hitherto been, and still is, owing that we do not enjoy it, in order that they may be made to bear the blame. Let our enemies deny if they can that they employ every artifice for the purpose, not only of hampering our exertions in forming and constituting our churches, but also of defeating and overthrowing whatever we begin. We labour sedulously in building up the church, and when we are in-

tent on the work, they, ever and anon, make a hostile entrance to disturb our operations, and allow us no interval which we might employ in arranging the domestic concerns of the church. After this they upbraid us with the dilapidation of which they are themselves the cause. What kind of ingenuousness is this, to give us constant annoyance, and then make it a charge against us, that, in consequence of that annoyance, we are not at leisure to arrange all the departments of the church? God is witness to our grief, men are witnesses to our complaints, on account of the distance at which we still are from perfection. But then it is said, there are some things pertaining to discipline which we have discarded. True; but as men are wont, in rebuilding a fallen edifice, to drag out and collect the fragments which lie piled together, or scattered about, in order that they may fit each into its proper place, so were we obliged to act. . For if any part of ancient discipline survived, it was so mixed and buried with the confused mass of ruins; it had so lost its pristine form, that no use could be made of it till it was gathered out from amidst the confusion.

I wish, at all events, our opponents would stimulate us by their example. The discipline which they clamorously maintain that we have not, do they themselves possess? Would it not be better were they to unite with us in admitting and confessing their faults in the presence of God, than to upbraid

us with what may instantly be retorted on their own heads? Discipline consists of two parts, the one relating to the clergy, the other to the people. Now, I wish to know with what strictness they confine their clergy to an upright and chaste behaviour. That purer and more refined holiness to which the ancient canons bind the clergy, I exact not of them. For I know how they inwardly laugh when any one resuscitates from oblivion those laws which have now been dead for several ages. All I ask of their clergy is common decency, so that, if they are not distinguished for purity of life, they may, at least, not be infamous for turpitude. When any one, by means of gifts, or favour, or sordid obsequiousness, or surreptitious certificates, winds his way into the priesthood, the canons pronounce it simony, and order it as such to be punished. How many, in the present day, enter the priesthood by any other means? But adieu, as I have said, to that stern rigour. Still, were no enactment on the subject in existence, how disgraceful is it that the houses of bishops should be forges of open and adulterous simony? What shall I say of the Roman See, where it now seems matter of course that sacerdotal offices are openly disposed of to the highest bidder, or where they are the hire paid for panderism and sorcery, and the obscener crimes? If common sense has any influence amongst us, can it but seem monstrous that boys of twelve years of age should be made archbishops? When Christ

was buffeted, was he more insulted than by this? Can there be a greater mockery to God and man, than when a boy is set to rule a Christian people, and installed in the seat of a father and pastor? The injunctions of the canons concerning bishops and presbyters are, that all should be vigilant in their stations, and no one long absent from his church. But, let us suppose that there was no such precept, who sees not that the Christian name is subjected to the derision even of Turks, when the denomination of pastor of a church is given to one who does not pay it a single visit during his whole life? For, as to constant residence in the place where he has been appointed pastor, it is now long since an example of it became rare. Bishops and abbots either hold their own courts, or dwell in ordinary in the courts of princes. Each, according to his disposition, selects the place where he may live in luxury. Those, again, who take more pleasure in their nest, reside, indeed, in their benefices, but as lazy-bellies, to whom nothing is less known than their duty! It was forbidden by the ancient canons to give two churches to one individual. Well, let this prohibition be as it had ever been. Still, with what gloss will they excuse the absurdity of bestowing five benefices, or more, on one man? of allowing one, and that one sometimes a boy, to possess three bishoprics, seated at such a distance from each other that he could scarcely make the circuit of them in a year, were he to do nothing else? The

canons require, that in promoting priests, a strict and minute examination be made into life and doctrine. Let us concede to the present times, that they cannot be tied down to so stern a rule. But we see how the ignorant, and those utterly devoid both of learning and prudence, are inducted without discrimination. Even in hiring a mule-driver, more regard is paid to his past life than in choosing a priest. This is no fiction, no exaggeration. True, they go through the form like players on a stage, that they may exhibit some image of ancient practice. The bishops, or their suffragans, put the question, whether those whom they have determined to ordain are worthy? There is some one present to answer that they are worthy. There is no occasion to go far for a witness, or bribe him for his testimony. The answer is merely a form; all beadles, tonsors, and doorkeepers, know it by heart. Then, after ordination, the least suspicion of lewdness in the clergy ought, according to the ancient canons, to be corrected, and the proof of it punished with deposition and excommunication. Let us remit somewhat of this ancient rigour. Yet, what will be said to such a toleration of daily lewdness, as might almost imply a right to commit it? The canons declare, that on no account shall a clergyman be permitted to indulge in hunting, or gaming, or revelry, and dancing. Nay, they even expel from the ministry every man to whom any kind of infamy attaches. In like manner, all who

involve themselves in secular affairs, or so intermeddle in civil offices as to distract their attention from the ministry—all, in fine, who are not assiduous in the discharge of their duties, they order to be severely censured, and, if they repent not, deposed. It will be objected, that these severe remedies, which cut all vices to the quick, this age cannot bear. Be it so. I do not call upon them for so much purity. But that an unbridled licentiousness should reign in the clergy, a licentiousness so unbridled that they, more than any other order, give additional taint to a world already most corrupt, who can forgive them this?

With regard to the discipline exercised over the people, the matter stands thus:—Provided the domination of the clergy remains intact, provided no deduction is made from their tribute or plunder, almost any thing else is done with impunity, or carelessly overlooked. We see the general prevalence of all kinds of wickedness in the manners of society. In proof of this, I will call no other witnesses than your Imperial Majesty, and you, Most Illustrious Princes. I admit that the fact is attributable to many causes, but among the many, the primary cause is that the priests, either from indulgence or carelessness, have allowed the wicked to give loose reins to their lusts. How do they act at the present hour? What care do they employ in eradicating vices, or at least in

checking them? Where are their admonitions? Where their censures? To omit other things, what use is made of excommunication, the best nerve of discipline? True, they possess, under the name of excommunication, a tyrannical thunderbolt which they hurl at those whom they call contumacious. But what contumacy do they punish, unless it be of persons who, when cited to their tribunal for pecuniary reasons, have either not appeared, or from poverty have failed to satisfy their demands? Accordingly, that most salutary remedy for chastising the guilty, they merely abuse in vexing the poor and the innocent. They have, moreover, the ridiculous custom of sometimes flagellating hidden crimes with an anathema, as in the case of theft, when the thief is unknown. This practice is altogether at variance with the institution of Christ. But, though so many disgraceful proceedings take place openly before the eyes of all, as to them, excommunication is asleep. And yet the very persons among whom all these disorders prevail have the hardihood to upbraid us with want of order! No doubt, if we are equally guilty, we gain nothing by accusing them; but in what I have hitherto said, my object has not been to evade the charge which they bring against us by means of recrimination, but to show the real value of that discipline which they complain that we have overthrown. If it is thought proper to compare the two, we are confident that our disorder, such as it is, will be found

at all events somewhat more orderly than the kind of order in which they glory. I mean not to palliate or flatter our defects, when I thus speak. I know how much we require to be improved. Undoubtedly, were God to call us to account, excuse would be difficult; but when called to answer our enemies we have a better cause, and an easier victory than we could wish.

With similar effrontery, they clamour that we have seized upon the wealth of the church, and applied it to secular purposes. Were I to say that we have not sinned in this respect, I should lie. Indeed, changes of such magnitude are seldom made without bringing some inconveniences along with them. If, herein, aught has been done wrong, I excuse it not. But, with what face do our adversaries present this charge against us? They say, it is sacrilege to convert the wealth of the church to secular uses. I admit it. They add, that we do so. I reply, that we have not the least objection to answer for ourselves, provided they, too, in their turn, come prepared to plead their cause. We will immediately attend to our own case; meanwhile let us see what they do. Of bishops I say nothing, except what all see, that they not only rival princes in the splendour of their dress, the luxuries of their table, the number of their servants, the magnificence of their palaces, in short, every kind of luxury; but also that they dilapidate and squander ecclesiastical revenues, in expenditure of

a much more shameful description. I say nothing of field-sports, nothing of gaming, nothing of the other pleasures which absorb the greater portion of their incomes. But, to take from the church, in order to spend on pimps and harlots, this, surely, is too bad. Then how absurd, not only to plume themselves on pomp and show, but to carry indulgence in them to the utmost excess. Time was, when poverty in priests was deemed glorious. So it was in the Council of Aquila. On one occasion, too, it was decreed that a bishop should reside within a short distance of his church in an humble dwelling, with a scanty table and mean furniture. (Conc. Carth. iv. cap. iv. Con. 14.) But, without going to that ancient rigour, after numerous corruptions had crept in with the progress of wealth, even then the ancient law was again confirmed which divided ecclesiastical revenues into four portions; one to go to the bishop for hospitality, and the relief of those in want, another to the clergy, a third to the poor, and a fourth to the repairing of churches. Gregory attests that this rule was in full observance even in his day. Besides, were there no laws on the subject, and at one time there were none, (for that which I have mentioned was, as in the case of other laws, rendered necessary by the corruption of manners,) still there is no man who will not admit the truth of what Jerome says, (*ad Nepotianum*,) that it is the glory of a bishop to provide for the wants of the poor, and the disgrace of all

priests to have a hankering after private wealth. It will perhaps be thought that another injunction which he gives in the same passage is too rigorous, viz., that open table should be kept for the poor, and for strangers. It is, however, equally well founded.

The nearer abbots approach to bishops in extent of revenue, the more they resemble them. Canons and parish priests, not deriving enough from one cure for gluttony, luxury, and pomp, soon found out a compendious method of remedying the inconvenience. For there is nothing to prevent him who could, in one month, squander much more than he draws in a year, from holding four or five benefices. The burden is nothing thought of. For there are vicars at hand ready to stoop, and take it on their shoulders, provided they are allowed to gobble up some small portion of the proceeds. Nay, few are found who will be contented with one bishopric, or one abbacy. Those of the clergy who live at the public expense of the church, though able to live on their patrimony, Jerome styles sacrilegious. (C. Cler. I. Quest. 2.) What, then, must be thought of those who at once engulf three bishoprics, *i. e.* from fifty to a hundred tolerable patrimonies? And, lest they complain that they are unjustly traduced for the fault of a few, what are we to think of those who not only luxuriate on the public revenues of the church, but abuse them in paying the hire of panders and courtesans? I speak only of what is

notorious. Then, were we to ask not at all, but at the few who reside in their benefices, by what right they receive even a frugal and moderate stipend, they are not able to answer. For what duties do they perform in return? In the same way as anciently, under the law, those who served at the altar lived by the altar, "even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (1 Cor. ix. 9.) These are Paul's words. Let them, then, show us that they are ministers of the gospel, and I will have no difficulty in conceding their right to stipend. The ox must not be muzzled that treadeth out the corn. But is it not altogether at variance with reason that the ploughing oxen should starve, and the lazy asses be fed? They will say, however, that they serve at the altar. I answer, that the priests under the law deserved maintenance, by ministering at the altar; but that, as Paul declares, the case under the New Testament is different. And what are those altar services, for which they allege that maintenance is due to them? Forsooth, that they perform their masses and chant in their churches, *i. e.*, partly labour to no purpose, and partly perpetrate sacrilege, thereby provoking the anger of God. It is for this that they are alimented at the public expense.

There are some who accuse our Princes of inextinguishable sacrilege, as having with violence and the greatest injustice seized upon the patrimony of the church, which had been

consecrated to God, and as now dilapidating it for profane uses. I have already declared that I am unwilling to be the apologist of every thing that is done amongst us; nay, rather, I openly declare my dissatisfaction that more regard is not paid to the due application of ecclesiastical revenues to those purposes only for which they were destined. This I deplore in common with all good men. But the only point under discussion at present is, whether our princes sacrilegiously seized on the revenues of the church, when they appropriated what they had rescued out of the hands of priests and monks? Is it profanation to apply these to some other purpose than stuffing such lazy-bellies? For it is their own cause which our adversaries plead, not the cause of Christ and his church. No doubt, heavy judgments are denounced against those who rob the church, and carry off for their own use what belongs to her. But the reason is at the same time added, viz. because they defraud true ministers of their maintenance, and because, starving the poor to death, they are guilty of their blood. But what have our opponents to do with this? For who among their whole tribe can make the declaration which Ambrose once made, that whatever he possessed, was the revenue of the needy; and again, that every thing which a bishop possesses belongs to the poor? (*Ambrose, Epist., Lib. v. Ep. 31 et 33.*) Nay, how few of them do not abuse what they possess, with as much license as if it had

been given to be profusely squandered as they list! It is vain, therefore, for them to expostulate, because deprived of that which they possessed without any right, and wasted with the greatest iniquity. And it was not only lawful, but necessary also, for our princes so to deprive them. When they saw the church absolutely destitute of true ministers, and the revenues destined for their support absorbed by lazy idle men, when they saw the patrimony of Christ and the poor either engulfed by a few, or dissolutely wasted on expensive luxuries, were they not to interfere? Nay, when they saw the obstinate enemies of the truth lying like an *incubus* on the patrimony of the church, and abusing it, to attack Christ, to oppress sound doctrine, and persecute its ministers, was it not right immediately to wrest it from their hands, that, at all events, they might not be supplied and armed with the resources of the church to vex the church? King Josiah is commended, on the authority of the Holy Spirit, because, when he perceived that the sacred oblations were improperly consumed by the priests, he appointed an officer to call them to account. (2 Chron. xxiv. 14.) And yet they were priests whom God had entrusted with the ordinary administration. What, then, is to be done with those who exercise no lawful ministry, and who not only, like them, neglect the repairing of the temple, but exert all their nerves and resources to pull down the church?

But some one will ask, how are the appropriated revenues employed? Certainly not in a manner altogether free from blame, but still in a manner far better and holier than by our enemies. By means of them, at all events, true ministers are supported, who feed their flocks with the doctrine of salvation, whereas, formerly, though the churches were left destitute of pastors, the people were heavily burdened for their support. Wherever schools or hospitals for the poor existed, they remain; in some instances their revenues have been increased; in none have they been diminished. In many places, also, in lieu of monasteries, hospitals have been established where there were none before; in others new schools have been erected, in which not only have regular salaries been given to the masters, but youths also are trained in the hope of being afterwards of service to the church. In fine, churches derive many advantages in common from these revenues, with which, before, only monks and priests were gorged. Nor is it a small portion which is devoted to extraordinary expenses, though these have the best title to be taken into account. It is certain that much more is consumed when matters are in such disorder, than would be if proper arrangements were made among the churches. But nothing could be more unjust than to deny to our princes and magistrates the right of making expenditure of this kind, not for their private benefit, but to meet the public necessities of the church. Besides, our

adversaries forget to deduct their spoliations and unjust exactions by which communities were pillaged for sacrifices, but of which they are now relieved. But there is one reason which renders all this discussion, in a great measure, superfluous, viz., that more than three years ago, our princes declared their readiness to make restitution, provided the same course were enforced against those who detain a much larger amount for a less honourable cause, and who are guilty of much greater dissoluteness in the administration of it. Our princes, therefore, stand bound to your Imperial Majesty by their promise. Their confession also is before the world, and hence, in regard to uniformity of doctrine, there ought not to be any impediment.

The last and principal charge which they bring against us is, that we have made a schism in the church. And here they boldly maintain against us that in no case is it lawful to break the unity of the church. But how far they do us injury, the books of our authors bear witness. Now, however, let them take this brief reply—that we neither dissent from the church, nor are aliens from her communion. But, as by this specious name of church, they are wont to cast dust in the eyes even of those who are otherwise pious and well disposed, I beseech your Imperial Majesty, and you, Most Illustrious Princes, *first*, to divest yourselves of all prejudice, that you may give an impartial ear to

our defence; *secondly*, not to take instant alarm on hearing the name of church, but to remember that the prophets and apostles had, with the pretended church of their days, a contest similar to that which you see us have with the Roman Pontiff and his whole train. When they, by the command of God, inveighed freely against idolatry, superstition, and the profanation of the temple, and of holy things, against the carelessness and lethargy of priests, and against the general avarice, cruelty, and licentiousness, they were constantly met with the objection which our opponents have ever in their mouths—that by dissenting from the common opinion, they violated the unity of the church. The ordinary government of the church was then vested in the priests. They had not presumptuously arrogated it to themselves, but God had conferred it upon them by his law. It would occupy too much time to point out all the instances in which the apostles and prophets were thus assailed. Let us be contented with a single instance, in the case of Jeremiah. He had to do with the whole college of priests, and the arms with which they attacked him were these, “Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet.” (Jer. xviii. 18.) They had among them a High Priest, to reject whose judgment was a capital crime, and they had the whole order to which God himself had committed

the government of the Jewish church concurring with them. If the unity of the church is violated by him, who, instructed solely by the truth of God, opposes himself to ordinary authority, the prophet must be a schismatic, because not at all deterred by such menaces from warring with the impiety of the priests, he steadily persevered. That the eternal truth of God, preached by the prophets and apostles, is on our side, we are prepared to show, and it is indeed easy for any man to perceive. But all that is done is to assail us with this battering-ram—"nothing can excuse withdrawal from the church." We utterly deny that we do so. What, then, is the argument with which they urge us? Nothing more than this, that to them belongs the ordinary government of the church. But how much better right had the enemies of Jeremiah to use this argument? To them, at all events, there still remained a legal priesthood, instituted by God; so that their vocation was unquestionable. Those who, in the present day, have the name of prelates, cannot prove their vocation by any laws, human or divine. Be it, however, that in this respect both are on a footing, still, unless they previously convict the holy prophet of schism, they will prove nothing against us by that specious title of church. I have thus given one prophet as an example. But all the others declare that they had the same battle to fight—the wicked priests endeavouring to overwhelm them by a perversion of this term

church. And how did the apostles act? Was it not necessary for them, as the professed servants of Christ, to declare war upon the synagogue? And yet both the office and dignity of the priesthood were not then lost. But it will be said, that though the prophets and apostles dissented from wicked priests in doctrine, they still cultivated communion with them in sacrifice and prayer. I admit they did, provided they were not forced into idolatry. But do we read that any one of the prophets ever sacrificed in Bethel? Is it imaginable that any of the faithful communicated in impure sacrifices, when Antiochus polluted the temple, and introduced into it his profane rites?

On the whole, the conclusion is, that the servants of God were never obstructed by this empty title of church, when it was put forward to support the reign of impiety. Therefore, it is not enough simply to throw out the name of church, but judgment must be used to ascertain which is the true church, and what the nature of its unity. And the thing necessary to be attended to, first of all, is, to beware of separating the church from Christ its Head. I mean, that we must be contented to take the doctrine of his gospel as he sealed it with his blood. Our adversaries, therefore, if they would persuade us that they are the true church, behove, first of all, to show that they hold the true doctrine of God; and this is the meaning of what we often repeat, viz., that the uniform characteristics of a well-

ordered church are the preaching of sound doctrine, and the pure administration of the sacraments. Since Paul declares that the church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," it necessarily follows that any church not resting on this foundation, must immediately fall. I come now to our opponents. They, no doubt, boast in lofty terms that Christ is on their side. We will believe it as soon as they exhibit him in their word, but no sooner. They, in the same way, insist on the term church. But where, we ask, is that doctrine which Paul declares to be the only foundation of the church? Doubtless your Imperial Majesty now sees that there is a vast difference between assailing us with the reality and assailing us only with the name of church. We are as ready to confess as they are that those who abandon the church, the common mother of the faithful, the "pillar and ground of the truth," revolt from Christ also, but we mean a church which, from incorruptible seed, begets children for immortality, and, when begotten, nourishes them with spiritual food, (that seed and food being the word of God,) and which, by its ministry, preserves entire the truth which God deposited in its bosom. This mark is in no degree doubtful, in no degree fallacious, and it is the mark which God himself impressed upon his church, that she might be discerned thereby. Can it be said we are unjust in demanding to see this mark? Wherever it exists not, no face of a church is

seen. If the name, merely, is pretended, we have only to quote the well-known passage of Jeremiah, "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these.'" (Jer. vii. 4.) "Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?" (Jer. vii. 11.)

In like manner, the unity of the church, such as Paul describes it, we hold sacred, and we pronounce anathema against all who violate it in any way. The principle from which Paul derives unity is, that there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," who hath called us into one hope. (Eph. iv. 4, 5.) Therefore, we will be one body and one spirit, as is here enjoined, if we adhere to God, *i. e.* be bound to each other by the tie of faith. We ought, however, to remember what is said in another passage, "that faith cometh by the word of God." Let it, therefore, be a fixed point, that we are united by a holy unity, when, consenting in pure doctrine, we cleave to Christ alone. And, indeed, if concurrence in any kind of doctrine were sufficient, in what possible way could the church of God be distinguished from the impious factions of the wicked? Wherefore, the apostle shortly after adds, that the ministry was instituted "for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God: that we be no more children tossed to and fro, and

carried about with every wind of doctrine, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." (Eph. iv. 12, 13, 14, 15.) Could he in plainer terms comprise the whole unity of the church in a holy agreement in true doctrine, than when he calls us to Christ and to faith, which consists in knowing him, and to obedience to the truth? Nor is any lengthened demonstration of this needed by those who believe the church to be that sheepfold of which Christ alone is the Shepherd, and where the sheep hear his voice only, and are able to distinguish it from the voice of strangers. The same thing is confirmed by the prayer which Paul offers in behalf of the Romans: "The God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. xv. 5, 6.)

Let our opponents, then, in the first instance, prove their proximity to Christ, and then let them convict us of schism in daring to depart from them in doctrine. But, since I have made it plain, that Christ is banished from their society, and the doctrine of his gospel exterminated, their charge against us simply amounts to this, that we adhere to Christ in preference to them. For what man, pray, will believe that those who refuse to be led away from Christ and his truth, in order to deliver themselves into the power of men,

are thereby schismatics, and deserters from the communion of the church? I certainly admit that respect is to be shown to priests, and that there is great danger in despising ordinary authority. If, then, they were to say, that we are not at our own hand to resist ordinary authority, we should have no difficulty in subscribing to the sentiment. For we are not so rude, as not to see what confusion must arise when the authority of rulers is not respected. Let pastors then have their due honour—an honour, however, not derogatory in any degree to the supreme authority of Christ, to whom it behoves them and every man to be subject. For God declares by Malachi, that the government of the Israelitish church was committed to the priests, under the condition, that they should faithfully fulfill the covenant made with them, viz., that their “lips should keep knowledge,” and expound the law to the people. (Mal. ii. 7.) When the priests altogether failed in this condition, he declares, that, by their perfidy, the covenant was abrogated and made null. Pastors are mistaken if they imagine that they are invested with the government of the church on any other terms than that of being ministers and witnesses of the truth of God. As long, therefore, as, in opposition to the law and to the nature of their office, they eagerly wage war with the truth of God, let them not arrogate to themselves a power which God never bestowed, either formerly

on priests, or now on bishops, on any other terms than those which have been mentioned.

But, because they hold that the communion of the church is confined to a kind of regimen which they have struck out for themselves, they think it sufficient to decide the victory in their favour, when they point to our alienation from the Romish See. But to this vaunted primacy of the Romish See it is not difficult to reply. It is a subject, however, on which I will not here enter, both because it would occupy too much time, and because it has been amply discussed by our writers. I will only beg your Imperial Majesty and Most Illustrious Princes to listen to Cyprian, when he points out a better method of ascertaining the true communion of the church, than that of referring it, as our opponents do, to the Roman Pontiff alone. For, after placing the only source of ecclesiastical concord in the episcopal authority of Christ, which episcopal authority he affirms that each bishop, to the extent to which it has been communicated, holds entire, he thus proceeds: "There is one church, which, by the increase of its fruitfulness, spreads into a multitude, just as there are rays of the sun, but only one light, many branches in a tree, but one trunk, upheld by its tenacious root; and when many streams flow from one fountain, though, from the copiousness of the supply, there seems a division into parts, still, in regard to the origin, unity is preserv-

ed. Separate a ray from the body of the sun, the unity of the light is not divided. Break a branch from a tree, that which is broken cannot germinate. Cut off a stream from the fountain, and it dries up. So, also, the church of God, irradiated with light, sends its beams over the whole world. Still it is one light which is every where diffused. 'The unity of the body is not violated.'" (*Cyprian, De Unitat. Ecclesiæ.*) Heresies and schisms, therefore, arise when a return is not made to the origin of truth, when neither the head is regarded, nor the doctrine of the heavenly Master preserved. Let them then show us a hierarchy in which the bishops are distinguished, but not for refusing to be subject to Christ, in which they depend upon him as the only head, and act solely with reference to him, in which they cultivate brotherly fellowship with each other, bound together by no other tie but his truth; then, indeed, I will confess that there is no anathema too strong for those who do not regard them with reverence, and yield them the fullest obedience. But is there any thing like this in that false mask of hierarchy on which they plume themselves? The Roman Pontiff alone as Christ's vicar is in the ascendant, and domineers without law and without measure, after the manner of a tyrant, nay, with more abandoned effrontery than any tyrant. The rest of the body is framed more according to his standard than that of Christ. The light of which Cyprian speaks is extinguished, the

copious fountain cut off; in short, the only thing exhibited is the tallness of the tree, but a tree dissevered from its root.

I am aware that our adversaries have good reason for labouring so strenuously to maintain the primacy of the Romish See. They feel that on it both they and their all depend. But your part, Most Invincible Emperor, and Most Illustrious Princes, is to be on your guard in order that they may not with vain glosses deceive you, as they are wont to deceive the unwary. And, first, this vaunted supremacy, even themselves are forced to confess, was established by no divine authority, but by the mere will of man. At least, when we give proof of this fact, though they do not expressly assent, they seem as if ashamed to maintain the opposite. There was a time, indeed, when they audaciously perverted certain passages of Scripture to confirm this palpable falsehood, but as soon as we came to close quarters, it was found easy to pluck out of their hands the bits of lath, to which, when at a distance, they had given the appearance of swords. Abandoned, accordingly, by the word of God, they flee for aid to antiquity. But here, also, without much ado, we dislodge them. For both the writings of holy Fathers, the acts of Councils, and all history, make it plain that this height of power, which the Roman Pontiff has now possessed for about four hundred years, was attained gradually, or rather was either craftily crept into, or violently seized

But let us forgive them this, and let them take for granted that primacy was divinely bestowed on the Romish see, and has been sanctioned by the uniform consent of the ancient church; still there is room for this primacy only on the supposition that Rome has both a true church and a true bishop. For the honour of the seat cannot remain after the seat itself has ceased to exist. I ask, then, in what respect the Roman Pontiff performs the duty of a bishop, so as to oblige us to recognise him as a bishop? There is a celebrated saying of Augustine, "Bishopric is the name of an office, and not a mere title of honour." And ancient Synods define the duties of a bishop to consist in feeding the people, by preaching the word, in administering the sacraments, in curbing clergy and people by holy discipline, and, in order not to be distracted from these duties, in withdrawing from all the ordinary cares of the present life. In all these duties, presbyters ought to be the bishop's coadjutors. Which of them do the Pope and his Cardinals pretend to perform? Let them say, then, on what ground they claim to be regarded as legitimate pastors, while they do not, with their little finger, in appearance even, touch any part of the duty.

But let us grant all these things, viz., that he is a bishop who entirely neglects every part of his duty, and that a church which is destitute, as well of the ministry of the word, as of the pure administration of the sacra-

ments; still what answer is made when we add not only that these are wanting, but that every thing which exists is directly the reverse? Now, for several centuries that see has been possessed by impious superstitions, open idolatry, perverse doctrines, while those great truths, in which the Christian religion chiefly consists, have been suppressed. By the prostitution of the sacraments to filthy lucre, and other abominations, Christ has been held up to such extreme derision, that he has in a manner been crucified afresh. Can she be the mother of all churches, who not only does not retain, I do not say the face, but even a single lineament, of the true church, and has snapt asunder all those bonds of holy communion by which believers should be linked together? The Roman Pontiff is now opposing himself to the reviving doctrines of the gospel, just as if aware that his head is at stake. Does he not, by this very fact, demonstrate that there will be no safety for his see unless he can put to flight the kingdom of Christ? Your Imperial Majesty is aware how wide a field of discussion here opens upon me. But to conclude this point in a few words, I deny that see to be apostolical, wherein nought is seen but a shocking apostasy—I deny him to be the vicar of Christ, who by his deeds demonstrates that he is Antichrist—I deny him to be the successor of Peter, who is doing his utmost to demolish every edifice that Peter built—and I deny him to be the head of the church, who by his

tyranny lacerates and dismembers the church, after dissevering her from Christ, her true and only Head. Let these denials be answered by those who are so bent on chaining the hierarchy of the church to the Romish see, that they hesitate not to subordinate the sure and tried doctrines of the gospel to the authority of the Pope. Yea, I say, let them answer; only do you, Most Invincible Emperor, and Most Illustrious Princes, consider whether, in so calling upon them, the thing I ask is just or unjust.

From what has been said, it will doubtless be easy for you to perceive how little attention is due to the calumny of our adversaries, when they accuse us of impious presumption, and as it were inextinguishable audacity, in having attempted to purify the church from corruption, both in doctrine and ceremonies, without waiting for the beck of the Roman Pontiff. They say we have done what private individuals have no right to do. But, in regard to ameliorating the condition of the church, what was to be hoped from him to whom we were required to give place? Any man who considers how Luther and the other reformers acted at the outset, and how they afterwards proceeded, will deem it unnecessary to call upon us for any defence. When matters were still entire, Luther himself besought the Pontiff that he would be pleased to cure the very grievous disorders of the church. Did his supplication succeed? The evils having still increased, the necessity of the case, even had

Luther been silent, should have been stimulus enough to urge the Pope to delay no longer. The whole Christian world plainly demanded this of him, and he had in his hands the means of satisfying the pious wishes of all. Did he do so? He now talks of impediments. But if the fact be traced to its source, it will be found that he has all along been, both to himself and to others, the only impediment. But why insist on these lighter arguments? Is it not in itself alone an argument of sufficient clearness and sufficient weight, that, from the commencement up to the present time, he gives us no hope of transacting with him until we again bury Christ, and return to every impiety which formerly existed, that he may establish them on a firmer basis than before? This, unquestionably, is the reason why still, in the present day, our opponents so strenuously maintain that we had no right to intermeddle with the revival of the church—not that the thing was not necessary, (this it were too desperate effrontery to deny,) but because they are desirous that as well the safety as the ruin of the church should be suspended on the mere beck and pleasure of the Roman Pontiff.

Let us now attend to the only remedy left us by those who think it impiety to move a finger, how great soever the evils by which the church is oppressed. They put us off to a general council. *What? If the major part, from obstinacy, rush upon their own destruction, must we therefore perish along

with them, when we have the means of consulting for our own safety? But they tell us it is unlawful to violate the unity of the church, and that unity is violated if any party decide an article of faith by themselves, without calling in the others. Then, they enlarge on the inconveniences to which such a course might lead—that nothing could be expected but fearful devastation and chaotic confusion, were each people and nation to adopt for itself its peculiar form of faith. Things like these might be said justly, and even appositely to the occasion, if any one member of the church, in contempt of unity, should of its own accord separate itself from the others. But that is not the point now in dispute. I wish, indeed, it were possible for all the monarchs and states of the Christian world to unite in a holy league, and resolve on a simultaneous amendment of the present evils. But since we see that some are averse to amelioration, and that others involved in war, or occupied with other cares, cannot give their attention to the subject, how long, pray, must we, in waiting for others, defer consulting for ourselves? And more freely to explain the source of all our evils, we see that the Roman Pontiff, if he can prevent it, will never permit all churches to unite, I do not say in due consultation, but in assembling any council at all. He will, indeed, as often as he is asked, give promises in abundance, provided he sees all the ways shut up, and all modes of access interrupted, while he has in his hand obstruc-

tions which he can every now and then throw in, so as never to want pretexts for tergiversation. With a few exceptions, he has all the cardinals, bishops, and abbots, consenting with him in this matter, since their only thought is how to retain possession of their usurped tyranny. As to the welfare or destruction of the church, it gives them not the least concern.

I am not afraid, Most Invincible Cæsar, and Most Illustrious Princes, that my statement will seem incredible, or that it will be difficult to persuade you of its truth. Nay, rather I appeal to the consciences of you all, whether I have stated any thing which your own experience does not confirm. Meanwhile, the church lies in the greatest peril. An infinite number of souls, not knowing in what direction to turn, are miserably perplexed; many even, forestalled by death, perish, if not saved miraculously by the Lord; diversified sects arise; numbers, whose impiety was formerly hid, assume, from the present dissensions, a license to believe nothing at all, while many minds, otherwise not ill disposed, begin to part with their religious impressions. There is no discipline to check these evils; amongst us who glory in the name of Christ only, and have the same baptism, there is no more agreement than if we professed religions entirely different. And the most miserable thing of all is, that there is at hand, nay, almost in sight, a breaking up of the whole church, for which, after it has taken place, it

will be in vain to seek for remedies. Seeing, therefore, that in bringing assistance to the church in her great distress and extreme danger, no celerity can be too rapid, what else do those who put us off to a general council, of which there is no prospect, but insult both God and man? The Germans must therefore submit to have this sentence passed upon them, that they choose to look on quietly and see the church of God perish from their land, when they have the means of curing her disorders, or they must instantly bestir themselves to the work. This second alternative they will never adopt so speedily, as not to be even now deservedly condemned for not adopting sooner. But those persons, whoever they be, who, under the pretext of a general council, interpose delay, clearly have no other end in view, than by this artifice to spin out the time, and are no more to be listened to than if they confessed in word what they in deed demonstrate, that they are prepared to purchase their private advantage by the destruction of the church.

But it is said that it would be unprecedented for the Germans alone to undertake this reformation; that in no case when controversy has arisen concerning the doctrines of religion, was it ever heard that a single province could undertake the investigation and decision. What is this I hear? Do they imagine that by their mere assertion they will persuade the world to believe what the histories of all times refute? As often as some new

heresy emerged, or the church was disturbed by some dispute, was it not the usual custom immediately to convene a provincial synod, that the disturbance might thereby be terminated? It never was the custom to recur to a general council until the other remedy had been tried. Before bishops from the whole Christian world met at Nice to confute Arius, several synods had been held with that view in the east. For the sake of brevity, I pass over the other instances, but the thing which our enemies shun as unusual, is proved by the writings of the ancients to have been the ordinary practice. Have done, then, with this lying pretence of novelty.

Had this superstitious idea possessed the African bishops, they would have been too late in meeting the Donatists and Pelagians. The Donatists had already gained over a great part of Africa to their faction, nor was any place entirely free from the contagion. It was a controversy of the greatest moment, relating to the unity of the church and the due administration of baptism. According to the new wisdom of our opponents, the orthodox bishops, in order not to cut themselves off from the other members of the church, ought to have referred the question to a general council. Is this what they do? Nay, rather, knowing that in extinguishing an actual fire no time can be lost, they press and follow close upon the Donatists, now summoning them to a synod, now coming, as it were, to close quarters with them in discussion.

Let our enemies condemn of impious separation from the church, Augustine, and the other holy men of that age who concurred with him, because, without convoking a general council by imperial authority, they forced the Donatists to dispute with them, and hesitated not to treat in a provincial synod of a most difficult and dangerous controversy. There, too, Pelagius had shown his horns; instantly a synod was held to repress his audacity. When, after having for a short time feigned penitence, he had returned to his vomit, with the stigma which had been fixed on his impiety in Africa he betook himself to Rome, where he was received with considerable favour. What course do the pious bishops take? Do they allege that they are only a member of the church, and must wait for relief from a general council? Nay, they themselves assemble on the very first opportunity, and again and again anathematize the impious dogma with which many had now been infected, freely deciding and defining what ought to be held on the subjects of original sin and regenerating grace. Afterwards, indeed, they send to Rome a copy of their proceedings, partly that, by a common authority and consent, they may the more effectually crush the contumacy of the heretics, partly that they may admonish others of a danger, against which all ought to stand upon their guard. The flatterers of the Roman pontiff give the matter a different turn, as if the bishops had suspended their judg-

ment until the proceedings were ratified by Innocent V., who then presided over the church of Rome. But this impudent averment is more than refuted by the words of the holy fathers. For they neither ask Innocent to counsel them as to what they ought to do, nor do they refer it to him to decide, nor do they wait for his nod and authority, but they narrate that they had already taken cognizance of the cause, and passed sentence, condemning both the man and the doctrine, in order that Innocent, too, might imitate their example, if he desired not to fail in his duty. These things were done while as yet the churches agreed with each other in sound doctrine. Now, then, when all things threaten ruin if not speedily remedied, why hang waiting for the consent of those who leave not a stone unturned to prevent the truth of God, which they had put to flight, from again beaming forth? Ambrose, in his day, had a controversy with Auxentius on the primary article of our faith, *i. e.* the divinity of Christ. The Emperor favoured the view of Auxentius. He does not, however, appeal to a general council, under the pretext of its being unlawful that so important a cause should be decided in any other manner. He only demands, that, being a question of faith, it should be discussed in the church in presence of the people. And to what end the provincial synods, which were once regularly held twice a year, unless that bishops might consult together on emergent circum-

stances, as the nineteenth canon of the council of Chalcedon explains. An ancient enactment orders that the bishops of every province shall convene twice a year. The council of Chalcedon gives as the reason, that any errors which may have emerged may be corrected. Our opponents, contrary to what all know, deny the lawfulness of touching a corruption of doctrine or manners, until it has been laid before a general council. Nay, the very subterfuge by which the Arians, Palladius and Secundianus, declined the council of Aquileia was, because it was not full and general, all the eastern bishops being absent, and few even of the west making their appearance. And it is certain that of the Italians scarcely a half had convened. The Roman bishop had neither come in person, nor sent any one of his presbyters to represent him. To all these objections Ambrose replies, that it was not a thing without example for the western bishops to hold a synod, since the practice was familiar to those of the east—that the pious Emperors who summoned the council had acted wisely in leaving all at liberty to come, without compelling any; and, accordingly, all who thought proper had come, none being prohibited. Though the heretics continued to press their quibbling objections, the holy fathers did not, therefore, abandon their purpose. Assuredly, after such examples, your Imperial Majesty is not to be prohibited from using the means within your reach of

bringing back the body of the empire to sacred concord.

Though, as has been observed, our enemies, who advise procrastination, do it not with the view of shortly after consulting for the welfare of the church, but only of gaining time by delay, knowing, that if they can throw us back to a general council, the truce will be long enough; let us, however, assume that there is no obstacle to a general council being immediately called; let us even assume that it has been summoned in good earnest, that the day of meeting is at hand, and all things prepared. The Roman pontiff will, of course, preside, or if he declines to come, he will send one of his cardinals as Legate to preside in his stead, and he will doubtless select the one who he believes will be most faithful to his interests. The rest of the cardinals will take their seats, and next them the bishops and abbots. The seats beneath will be occupied by ordinary members, who are, for the most part, selected for subservience to the views of those above. It will, indeed, happen, that some few honest men will have seats among them, but they will be despised for the smallness of their number, and, made weak by fear, or dispirited by the hopelessness of doing any good, will be silent. Should any one of them, perchance, attempt to speak, he will instantly be put down by noise and clamour. But the great body will be ready to suffer any thing, sooner than allow the church to be

restored to a better condition. I say nothing of doctrine. Would that they could only come to the cause with an honest and docile temper. But it is certain as certainty itself, that the single resolution of all will be not to listen to any thing that is said, or to the arguments by which it is supported, be they what they may. Nay, they will not only stuff their ears with stubbornness and obstinacy, that they may not obey the truth, but will also arm themselves with ferocity to resist it. And why? Is it credible that those who do not admit into their ears any mention of sound doctrine, will spontaneously withdraw their opposition, as soon as it comes to be a matter of present practice? Can we hope that those who are constantly plotting to prevent the fallen kingdom of Christ from again rising in the world, will give a helping hand to raise it up, and advance it? Will those who are now, with fire and sword, raging against the truth, and doing all they can to whet and inflame the cruelty of others, show themselves moderate and humane? But were there nothing else, I leave it to your prudence, Most Invincible Emperor, and yours, Most Illustrious Princes, to consider whether or not it is for the private interest of the Roman pontiff, and his whole faction, that the church should be restored to true order, and its most corrupt condition reformed, according to the strict standard of the gospel. How much it is their wont to forget their own advantage, and, in disregard of it, to engage with heart

and soul in promoting the common welfare, you have learned by a sure experience !

Sire, will you leave the church to them, that they may decide concerning its reformation at their own will, or rather their own caprice? Will you remain waiting for their nod, resolved never to consult for the church till they consent? If they know this to be your intention, they will disentangle themselves by an easy process. They will decide that things must remain as they are. But let us suppose that they will be so overcome, either by a sense of shame, or by the authority of your Majesty, and the other Princes, as to put on some appearance of moderation, and part with some small portion of their power; will they, even of their own accord, condescend so far as to allow themselves to be reduced into order, that the kingdom of Christ may be upraised? But if they will not, to what end is the care of reforming the church committed to them, unless it be to expose the sheep to the wolves? If there is no other alternative, it were better that the church should be given up as desperate, than that she should fall into the hands of such physicians. It had, indeed, become those who have the name and hold the office of pastors, to be the first of all to fly to her assistance. It had, I admit, become them to come forward as leaders, and unite the princes with them, as associates and coadjutors in this holy work. But what if they decline to do it themselves? What if they are un-

willing it should be done by others? What if they leave not a stone unturned in order to prevent it? Are we, then, still to have regard to them; must no man move till they give the signal? Must we still listen to that solemn saw of theirs, "Nothing must be attempted till the Pope has approved?" Let your Majesty, then, be assured, and do you also, Most Illustrious Princes and distinguished personages, lay it to heart, as a certain fact, that the church, not only betrayed, deserted, and left destitute by her pastors, but vexed, overwhelmed with calamity, and doomed to destruction, throws herself on your protection. Nay, rather view it in this way—God has now furnished you with the means of giving a sure and striking proof of your fidelity towards Him. There is nothing in which all men ought to feel a deeper interest, nothing in which God wishes us to exhibit a more intense zeal, than in endeavouring that the glory of His name may remain unimpaired, His kingdom be advanced, and the pure doctrine which alone can guide us to true worship, flourish in full vigour. How much more, therefore, does it become princes to make these things their care, to design, commence, and prosecute them to a close, seeing God has honoured them with a communication of His name, that on earth they may be the guardians and vindicators of His glory?

Be unwilling, I beseech you, to lend an ear to ungodly men, who either cajole you with

a false show of counsel, in order that the church may receive no improvement at your hand, or disparage the cause,—though it is the greatest of all causes,—that you may be more remiss in undertaking it, or urge you to violent methods of proceeding in it. Hitherto, Most Invincible Emperor, in endeavouring to inflame you with rage, and, in a manner, clothe you in armour, they have lost their labour, and you will certainly transmit to posterity the distinguished praise, both of mildness and prudence, in not having suffered yourself to be once moved from moderation by the turbulent counsels, which have been so often and so strongly pressed upon you. Be it at all times your care that this praise be not wrested from you by the importunity of our enemies. Augustine acknowledges the discipline to be bad which terrifies heretics, but does not teach them. If heretics, who, by their intemperance, and without any just cause, disturb the church, are to be treated with a mildness ensuring that instruction shall always precede chastisement, how much more becoming is it to use humanity in this cause, in which we call God and men to witness that we seek nothing but a sincere consent on both sides to the pure doctrine of God? That the Roman pontiff and his followers breathe nothing but blood and slaughter, you yourself, Sire, can bear witness. Had you yielded to their fury, Germany had long ago been deluged with her own blood. You, too, Most Illustrious Prin-

ces, well know the fact. Can it be that it is the Spirit of God which drives them on headlong to such cruelty? But thus it is; licentiousness, which has long stalked abroad without hinderance, no sooner feels the curb than it breaks out into madness. If, besides those who are thus actuated, there are any who desire to see us crushed by violence and arms, either enkindled by the breath of others, or instigated from within by an inconsiderate zeal, they hate a cause which they know not. For the very same thing of which Tertullian complains in his Apology, as having happened to the church when she first arose, is also experienced by us in the present day. We are condemned merely from prejudice against our name, and antecedently to any investigation of our cause. And what do we contend for now, save that our cause, after due cognizance has once been taken of it, may at length be decided, according to truth and equity, and not according to any falsely preconceived opinion? Sire, it is, indeed, a noble proof both of humanity and of singular wisdom, that you have hitherto resisted the urgency with which our enemies have endeavoured to hurry you into an unjust severity. The next best thing is not to yield to the pernicious counsels of those who, under specious pretexts for delay, have for a long time hindered this holy work, (I mean the reformation of the church;) and what is worse, are endeavouring to prevent it altogether.

There is, perhaps, one remaining difficul-

ty which prevents you from commencing the work. Very many, not otherwise indisposed, are deterred from engaging in this holy undertaking, merely because antecedently to the attempt they despair of its success. But here two things ought to be considered, the one, that the difficulty is not so great as it appears to be, and the other, that, however great it be, there is nothing in it which ought to dispirit you, when you reflect that it is the cause of God, and that He overruling it, both our hopes may be surpassed and our impressions prove erroneous. The former of these it is no part of my present design to explain; a fitter opportunity will be found, when once the matter comes to be taken into serious consideration. This only I will say, that the execution will be more expeditious, and of less difficulty than is commonly supposed, provided there is courage enough in attempting it. However, considering, according to the well known sentiment of an old proverb, that there is nothing illustrious which is not also difficult and arduous, can we wonder, that in the greatest and most excellent of all causes, we must fight our way through many difficulties? I have already observed, that if we would not give deep offence to God, our minds must take a loftier view. For it is just to measure the power of God by the extent of our own powers, if we hope no more of the restoration of the church than the present state of affairs seems to promise. How slender soever the hope of success, God bids

us be of good courage, and put far away every thing like fear, that we may with alacrity gird ourselves for the work. Thus far, at least, let us do Him honour. Confiding in his Almighty power, let us not decline to try what the success is which He may be pleased to give.

In the present condition of the empire, your Imperial Majesty, and you, Most Illustrious Princes, necessarily involved in various cares, and distracted by a multiplicity of business, are agitated, and in a manner heaved on the surging waves. But be always assured, that of all works, this one is undoubtedly entitled to take precedence. I feel what nerve, what earnestness, what urgency, what ardour, the treatment of this subject requires. And I am well aware that persons will not be wanting to express their surprise, that on a subject so noble and splendid I should be so cold. But what could I do? I bend under its weight and magnitude, and I therefore see not how I can do better than set the matter before you simply, without any embellishment of words, that you may afterwards ponder and scrutinize it. First, call to mind the fearful calamities of the church, which might move to pity even minds of iron. Nay, set before your eyes her squalid and unsightly form, and the sad devastation which is every where beheld. How long, pray, will you allow the spouse of Christ, the mother of you all, to lie thus prostrated and afflicted—thus, too, when she is imploring your protection, and when the

means of relief are in your hand? Next, consider how much worse calamities impend. Final destruction cannot be far off, unless you interpose with the utmost speed. Christ will, indeed, in the way which to him seems good, preserve his church miraculously, and beyond human expectation; but this I say, that the consequence of a little longer delay on your part will be, that in Germany we shall not have even the form of a church. Look round, and see how many indications threaten that ruin which it is your duty to prevent, and announce that it is actually at hand. These things speak loud enough, though I were silent.

Such indications, however, ought not only to move us by their actual aspect; they ought also to remind us of coming vengeance. Divine worship being vitiated by so many false opinions, and perverted by so many impious and foul superstitions, the sacred majesty of God is insulted with atrocious contumely, his holy name profaned, his glory almost trampled under foot. Nay, while the whole Christian world is openly polluted with idolatry, men adore, instead of Him, their own fictions. A thousand superstitions reign, superstitions which are just so many open insults to Him. The power of Christ is almost obliterated from the minds of men, the hope of salvation is transferred from him to empty, frivolous, and nugatory ceremonies, while there is a pollution of the sacraments not less to be execrated. Baptism is deformed by numer-

ous additions, the holy supper is prostituted to all kinds of ignominy, religion throughout has degenerated into an entirely different form. If we are negligent in remedying these evils, God assuredly will not forget himself. How could He who declares that he will not allow his honour to be in any way impaired, fail to interpose when it is cast down and destroyed? How could He, who threatens with destruction all the nations among whom prophecy shall have failed, permit our open and contumacious contempt of the prophecies to go unpunished? How could He, who punished a slight stain on his supper so severely in the Corinthians, spare us in presuming to pollute it with so many unutterable blasphemies? How could He, who, by the mouth of all his prophets, testifies and proclaims that he is armed with vengeance against idolatry, leave untouched in us so many monstrous idolatries? Assuredly He does not so leave them, for we see how, sword in hand, He urges and pursues us. The Turkish war now occupies the minds of all, and fills them with alarm. It well may. Consultations are held to prepare the means of resistance. This, too, is prudently and necessarily done. All exclaim that there is need of no ordinary dispatch. I admit that there cannot be too much dispatch, provided, in the meantime, the consultation which ought to be first, the consultation how to restore the church to its proper state, is neither neglected nor retarded. Already delays more than enough have been

interposed. The fuel of the Turkish war is within, shut up in our bowels, and must first be removed, if we would successfully drive back the war itself.

In future, therefore, as often as you shall hear the croaking note—the business of reforming the church must be delayed for the present—there will be time enough to accomplish it after other matters are transacted,—remember, Most Invincible Emperor, and Most Illustrious Princes, that the matter on which you are to deliberate is, whether you are to leave to your posterity some empire or none. Yet, why do I speak of posterity? Even now, while your own eyes behold, it is half bent, and totters to its final ruin. In regard to ourselves, whatever be the event, we will always be supported, in the sight of God, by the consciousness that we have desired both to promote his glory and do good to his church; that we have laboured faithfully for that end; that, in short, we have done what we could. Our conscience tells us, that in all our wishes, and all our endeavours, we have had no other aim. And we have essayed, by clear proof, to testify the fact. And, certainly, while we feel assured, that we both care for and do the work of the Lord, we are also confident, that he will by no means be wanting, either to himself or to it. But be the issue what it may, we will never repent of having begun, and of having proceeded thus far. The Holy Spirit is a faithful and unerring witness to our doctrine. We know,

I say, that it is the eternal truth of God that we preach. We are, indeed, desirous, as we ought to be, that our ministry may prove salutary to the world; but to give it this effect belongs to God, not to us. If, to punish, partly the ingratitude, and partly the stubbornness of those to whom we desire to do good, success must prove desperate, and all things go to worse, I will say what it befits a Christian man to say, and what all who are true to this holy profession will subscribe:— We will die, but in death even be conquerors, not only because through it we shall have a sure passage to a better life, but because we know that our blood will be as seed to propagate the Divine truth which men now despise.

A
PATERNAL ADMONITION
BY THE
ROMAN PONTIFF, PAUL III.
TO THE
MOST INVINCIBLE EMPEROR CHARLES V.,
CHASTISING HIM,
BOTH BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN TOO INDULGENT
TO THE LUTHERANS, AND ALSO BECAUSE
HE HAD ASSUMED SOME AUTHORITY
IN CALLING A COUNCIL, AND
DEFINING CONTROVERSIES
OF FAITH.

TO THE READER.

This ADMONITION, as well for other reasons, as for containing a remarkable specimen of pontifical zeal, is every way worthy of being read by all. The opportunity ought to have been sooner afforded; but mysteries of this description do not instantly come into the hands of those whose interest or inclination it is to publish them; and, therefore, if this treasure appears later than was to have been wished, the reader will pardon the delay.

PAUL III., SUPREME PONTIFF,
TO THE EMPEROR CHARLES V.

SUBJECT.

THE Emperor, the year previous, after he had prepared to invade France, perceiving that the tranquillity of Germany could not be long maintained, unless, antecedent to his departure, some method were adopted by which the States of the Empire, notwithstanding of their religious dissensions, might remain at peace, issued an edict, providing that, until the matter were investigated, the parties should enjoy equal terms, and promising that he would embrace the earliest opportunity of calling a general, or, at least, a national council, or, failing this, that he would endeavour at the next Imperial Diet, after due discussion, that something should be finally resolved. The cause of piety was, indeed, deserving, above all others, of occupying the attention of the Emperor; but, being involved in a difficult and dangerous war, and unable to enter immediately on the subject, the wise and right-hearted Prince feared, not without reason, that disturbances might take place in his absence. It therefore seemed that nothing would be more conducive to the common safety of the Christian church, and the public tranquillity of Germany, or more convenient for his own private arrangements, than, while postponing the full consideration of the cause till a future period, to leave the parties in possession of equal rights, and under an equitable administration of the laws. The Roman pontiff, however, here shows that the publication of this edict had, for two reasons, given him no small concern. For, however slight the concession made to the Protestants, however little their relief from unjust prejudices,

he makes an outcry about excessive indulgence, while the Emperor's assumption of some jurisdiction in matters of religion he regards as a criminal indignity offered to himself. He complains that the Emperor, in claiming illegal jurisdiction, had committed two sins:—*First*, He had presumed, without consulting him, to promise a council; and, *Secondly*, He had not hesitated to undertake an investigation alien to his office. The holy Father, therefore, bitterly expostulates with him, both for his excessive lenity to the Lutherans, and for having violated and impaired the authority of the Roman see.

DEAREST SON, Salvation and Apostolical Benediction.—From the edict of your Majesty, we have learned the acts of your diet at Spires, in regard to which acts, while our fatherly love for you does not allow us to disguise our sentiments, the nature of the office and duty committed to us by God through Christ, for the guardianship of the universal church, compels us to admonish you in plain terms. (1.)* To this we are not a little moved by the impressive example of the divine severity towards Eli the priest, against whom, for treating his children too indulgently, and winking at their faults, there stands recorded the following severe sentence: "Because he knew that his children acted improperly, and did not correct them," therefore, saith the Lord, "the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated for ever by victims and offerings." This was the divine sentence, and it was immediately followed

* The figures in the letter and in the remarks correspond to each other, and point out the particular passages animadverted upon.

by the sudden and violent death, first of the sons, and then of Eli himself, and the consequent rejection of his posterity from the priesthood, thus fulfilling the word of the Lord.

(2.) Therefore, dear son, when we perceived from the acts of the diet, certain unbecoming decrees, and more unbecoming proposals,—of a kind, indeed, that, if carried into effect, (which God forbid,) will not only most assuredly endanger the salvation of your soul, but expose the peace and unity of the church, which we ought to study above all things, to greater perturbation than they have hitherto suffered; we were, indeed, unwilling to let them pass without admonishing, by this our letter; you who have been (3.) committed to us by God, to be honoured and loved as a first-born son, of this great peril, both to yourself and to the church. We have not, however, thought it necessary to admonish you as if you resembled the sons of Eli, whom a depraved disposition, and habitual wickedness, rendered almost inaccessible to pure discipline, but rather as one who, during the course of many years, entered not into the counsel of the ungodly: this giving us the greatest hope that our paternal admonition will not prove in vain. (4.) But, dear son, every thing depends on this, that you do not allow yourself to be led away from the unity of the church, that you do not fall away from the custom of the most religious Princes, your forefathers, but in every thing

pertaining to the discipline, order, and practice of the church, pursue the course by which you have, for many years, given the strongest proofs of heart-felt piety. (5.) And the nature of this course is, as often as any dispute arises concerning matters of religion, to refer the decision always, and in all points, to the apostolic see, and determine nothing till it has been consulted. But now, dear son, when you make mention of a general council as the most seasonable remedy for the afflicted condition of the church, or of a national council, (for this also you notice,) or of a future imperial diet against next autumn, in which you promise to treat of religion and other matters thereto appertaining, you thus act, you thus resolve, while you suppress the name of him to whom laws, human and divine, with the approving consent of so many centuries, have given (6.) supreme authority in calling councils, (7.) in determining with regard to them, and in arranging all matters having reference to the unity and welfare of the church. Nor are these the only points in which we complain that the practice of the church, and of your ancestors, has been not at all observed by you. For among the decrees of the late diet may be read other things besides, and not few in number, which are both most hurtful to piety, and subversive of all legal order. (8.) For when you propose that laics are to have the power of judging concerning spiritual things, and not only laics, but laics indis-

criminally, (9.) even the assertors of damnable heresies,—(10.) when you determine concerning ecclesiastical property, and future controversies relating thereto,—when those who (11.) were out of the church, and were long ago condemned by your own edict, you restore to their former honours in courts and tribunals, and this do of your own imperial authority, (12.) certainly not with the approbation of others, who persevere in ancient and holy obedience, (13.) which of those things, pray, accords with the divine customs and laws by which the church has been perpetually governed? Nay, they rather entirely deprive the church of all discipline, and of all order, without which, no human society can be governed. But the more at variance these things are with all right discipline, and with the customs of our forefathers, the less able are we to believe that they could ever emanate from your own judgment. Our belief is, that your wonted piety has for a time been suppressed by the counsels of bad men, who are now in rebellion against this holy see, and who, if unable to obtain your approval to the things which they wished to do against it, have, as we can easily suppose, laboured at least to obtain from you, by means of those edicts, some indication of alienated affection.* And we are the more

* In Calvin's Works, Ed. Amst. vol. viii. p. 178, the words are, "*Impetrare vero tanto magis debemus,*" &c. This is evidently a misprint. In the Latin edition of Pallavicini's History of the Council of Trent, in which

grieved they have obtained it, the more firmly we are persuaded of the loss and detriment which must accrue both to you and to the church, if you do not speedily return to yourself. This we cannot but dread more and more every day, the more attentively we consider who the persons are with whom you have formed a friendship. For if, as an apostle says, "Evil communications corrupt good manners," how much more is this to be dreaded (14.) when one is united in leagues and counsels with the wicked? We doubt not, indeed, that they have gained you over to their measures by suggesting hopes of piety, utility and honour, but no counsel is so utterly bad that it cannot deck itself with some such specious names as a gorgeous robe. But do you, son, "rather ask your father, and he will tell you, your ancestors, and they will declare to you." For they all with one voice exhort you to maintain the unity of the church, and yield honour and obedience to this holy see, as they all along exhorted you by their deeds, while all who are most distinguished for holiness and skill in the divine laws will, if you consult them, tell you that the severest of the divine judgments have befallen those, who, by whatever cause, by whatever appearance of piety induced, (15.) thought proper to assume to themselves the prerogatives of high priest.

the Admonition is given at length, the words are, "*Id vero eos impetrasse tanto magis dolemus,*" and from them the translation has been made,

The strongest of these inducements is that which the rebellious are wont to suggest, when they urge Princes to mount the high priest's chair, and assert a right and authority to deliberate and decide on religious causes. (16.) For they employ the negligence of priests as a motive to stimulate Princes to take upon themselves the settlement of religious controversies, and the ordering of ecclesiastical affairs. And who does not at first sight deem the act deserving of the highest praise? Every man will so deem it, if the act only be looked to. But, as in a well ordered household, in which the duties and offices are divided, it is not lawful for any one member to take it upon him to perform them all, though each of them is excellent in its kind, or, if he attempts it, though with a good intention, he is deservedly reprimanded by the head of the family, as, by an unseasonable zeal, destroying as far as possible the fairest thing in the house, (17.) namely, the order, without which no house can long stand, and doing the greatest injury to the wisdom of him who arranged it; (18.) so in the church of Christ, which is the house of God, in which all the offices are portioned out, and distributed each to each in such a way, that inferiors may not perform the offices of their superiors, it is still less lawful to disturb its order, in as much as it has been arranged with greater wisdom than can be supposed to exist in any house. All, however, do not see this, nor, Emperor, do we

suppose that you yet sufficiently see the great injury which you offer to divine Providence, when in this house of God, in which supremacy has been committed to priests, you assume to yourself honour and office. (19.) Neither did Uzzah see it when, reverentially accompanying the ark of God, which was drawn in a waggon by oxen, he put forth his hand to prevent it from falling, they having become restive. Who, among men, would have ventured to disapprove of the act? Who would not rather have commended him highly for putting forth his hand, when the priests were absent, and the ark already leaning over, was threatened with disaster by a wanton ox, as the Scriptures term it? There is no man who would not have applauded it as piously done, had not God shown by the severity of the punishment, that it was most displeasing to him,—immediately depriving Uzzah of life, for no other reason, (so the Scripture declares,) than for having rashly presumed to supply what pertained to the office of priests and Levites. That there was so much sinfulness in the act, who could have imagined? But, by this example, God wished to warn us not to provoke his wrath, by falling into the same snare. Of this thing we were desirous now to warn you, lest, induced by the deceitful persuasions of those who have the reformation of the church ever in their mouths, you might be tempted in so great an assemblage, not of oxen, but of priests, wantoning, as it were, while they

hear it on their shoulders, rashly to put forth your hand. (20.) Into the same snare fell Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who, dissatisfied that in a holy nation one should shine pre-eminent in dignity as high priest, resisted both Moses and Aaron, saying, "It is enough for you that the whole multitude are saints, and the Lord is among them, why do ye exalt yourselves above the people?" Though the words seem directed against both, yet, from the explanation of Moses, we learn that Aaron's office of high priest was the cause of all their indignation. When the whole people were holy, they thought it unjust that any one individual should excel in dignity.

How grievously the thing offended God is shown by the signal display of his justice and severity against them. The earth, yawning, swallows them up with their furniture and all that belonged to them. These ancient events I now recount, because (as an apostle says) they happened to them in a figure, and were written for our correction, on whom the ends of the world are come, that all may learn that if, (21.) in regard to a priesthood which served a tabernacle and shadow, and which, with the tabernacle, Divine Providence had determined to abolish, God manifested such care, as not to allow even the smallest change upon it by men's device to pass unavenged, how much greater reverence should be paid to those priests, who no longer serve a type and shadow to be abolished, but the true tabernacle itself, which shall never be removed,

and how much less ought we to think of changing even the minutest arrangement relating to them? In short, how much more grievously, and with how much more intolerable presumption, must we suppose those to sin against Divine Providence, who insist either on throwing this arrangement into confusion, or on transferring it to themselves, or who desire in any way to decide respecting (22.) that which long practice in the church, founded on the testimony of Scripture, sets forth and declares? Whatever be the mode, whatever the semblance of piety, wherever such schemes are attempted, there can be no doubt that pride, which is the root of the evil, is odious to God. (23.) This is strikingly illustrated by the example of King Uzziah, in which Scripture sets before us, both the root of the evil and its heavy punishment. The king, who, as Scripture testifies, was, in other respects, entitled to the highest praise, is charged with presumption, only in this, that he desired to burn incense. Who would not have deemed this a pious, rather than a presumptuous desire? But the Spirit of God in Scripture, when he comes to narrate the act, says, "The heart of Uzziah was lifted up." But wherein lifted up? In that he wished to perform another's office. After he was warned by the priests, but would not obey them, God instantly smote him with leprosy. These things, dearest son, we now pass in review before you, that you may perceive if it was a presumptuous act in Uzziah to burn

incense upon the altar, how much more presumptuous it must be to burn incense upon the altar of Christ's body, and prosecute other measures closely connected with religion? But think you it is not incense before God to enact laws concerning religion? It is, indeed, incense, incense, too, of all things, the most agreeable to God, (for, be assured, no odour is more grateful,) but to offer it is not your office, Emperor. It belongs to the priests of the Lord, and, (24.) in particular, to us, to whom God has given the power of loosing and binding. Consider into what part of the temple you enter, when, as at this day, you usurp their office. It is not into the court or into the sanctuary like Uzziah, for the act is not only holy, but the holiest, and, therefore, when you, at your own hand, penetrate hither, it is into the house of the Lord you penetrate, and into the holy of holies; you penetrate the very body of Christ in arrogating to yourself his office. It is no excuse to say that the act is holy, or that the laws which you propose to enact are not perpetual, but temporary, *i. e.* to last till the future council. For though the act is in itself pious, yet in one to whom God has not given this ministry it is most impious. (25.) For you are assuming to yourself a prerogative which is peculiar to God, to whom, alone, is reserved the judgment of priests; a prerogative which no one may assume, though only for a time. It is thus that God addresses wicked priests: "I myself, who am over the shepherds, will require my flock at their

hand." As God will do this thoroughly in his own time, so, (26.) whenever any one has, meanwhile, attempted, as by anticipation, to wrest it from his hand, for such daring he has always received the severest punishment. On the other hand, God has never allowed an age to pass without testifying, by some sure signs, that his greater mercies, both internal and external, and blessings of every kind, are due to those who, by their favour and assistance, enlarging and adorning the priesthood, have fostered the unity of the church, and its principal see, (27.) as we perceive in the case of Constantine the Great, the Theodosii, and Charlemagne, than whom no Christian emperors were more distinguished for the divine favour and for victory. Those, again, who withstood the priests, God not only permitted to fall into all kinds of turpitude, but often chastised with signal punishments, in testimony of his divine anger. We now speak not of those who attempted to strangle the church at its birth, of the Neros, the Domitians, and others of the sort, but of those who persecuted it when full grown, and when, beginning to exert the authority of its office over princes, the see of Peter was in the eyes of all princes constituted and confirmed. Those who resisted its authority were so chastised by God as to make it manifest how grateful to God obedience to this see is, and has always been, and, on the contrary, how displeasing and hateful is disobedience. (28.) The first of the emperors we read of, who broke out

in open revolt and in contempt of this holy see, was Anastasius. Gelasius, the Roman pontiff, admonished him not to favour the party of Acatius, Bishop of Constantinople, who had been condemned by the apostolic see, but he disobeyed the admonition. Hormisdas, the successor of Gelasius, having sent legates to him to urge him to desist from communion with heretics, he first heard them with contempt, and then dismissed them with insult. At length the divine anger struck him dead by lightning. He was succeeded in his impiety, but at intervals, by other emperors, (29.) as Mauritius, (30.) Constans, the second son of Justinianus, Constantinus Pogonatus, Philip, and Leo. But it were tedious to number up those who perished by deaths differing in their nature, but all violent or ignominious, after having been previously stript of their power and dignity, that in them divine justice might manifest itself, as taking vengeance on the disobedient. (31.) The series might be continued as far as that Henry who had long most grievously vexed the apostolic see, but at length made captive at Lodi by his own son, died in prison, Divine vengeance, by a most just retribution, punishing by a son, him who had, in so many ways, molested and disregarded the authority of one whom Divine Providence had set over him in the church, in the place of a father. (32.) The same thing may be said of Frederick the Second, except that his death, by strangulation, was more disastrous, in as much as his own son was

the executioner. It is true, however, that God does not always punish rebels in this way, since some of them he so permits to enjoy their own desires, that in regard to external punishment, they seem to sin with impunity, and live in affluence, as if they were happy. Holy fathers have piously thought that the reason why Divine Providence thus acts is, lest men should suppose, that if all the wicked were punished here, divine justice has no other tribunal. God, therefore, that He may be acknowledged just, openly punishes some as an example, while, in a manner, winking at the crimes of others, He reserves them for a severer sentence at His future judgment-seat. No sin, however, is dismissed unpunished. But of all punishments, the most fearful is, when those who offend God most grievously think they do it with impunity. For all such are struck with mental blindness, and given over to lusts, ignominy, and a reprobate mind, these being what the apostle enumerates as the proper scourges of the wicked. But while these are common to all the wicked, there are others especially reserved for those who have exerted their impiety (33.) in assailing the principal see, and in rending the unity of the church. This, indeed, we have observed in certain persons, who, the more shining their virtues were while they persevered in holy obedience, were, after their impious revolt, the more given up to monstrous passions of avarice, lust, and cruelty. History relates, that this

was the case with Anastasius, whom we mentioned above. And would that we had not similar examples in this our day! But Divine vengeance thus punishing disobedience to this prime see, has been signally manifested, not only on individuals, but also on kingdoms and provinces, in which we see that though the severest punishments of all have been inflicted on those who refused to have Christ for their Lord, the next place of wretchedness has been allotted to those who resisted the authority of the vicegerent of Christ. Two nations in particular, at one time most flourishing, have been thus chastised and smitten. The one persisted in pertinaciously denying Christ, and the other was long notorious above all other nations for contending with His vicegerent. The former is the nation of the Jews, than which none has suffered greater misery; (34.) the latter, the nation of the Greeks, who approached nearest to the Jews in misery, because they had approached nearest to them in impiety. Wherefore, if, in the case of emperors, kings, states, and nations, Christ himself, while preserving the authority of his vicegerent, has never allowed contempt of it to pass unavenged—if, by visiting disobedience with severe judgments, he shows how hateful to him such attempts have always been, how much would you sin against yourself, Cæsar, if (which God forbid) you were to attack this authority, seeing that in the eyes both of God and man this would be deemed more hateful in one

descended from Emperors, who have rendered to the apostolic see not more honour than they received from it? We write not these things, dearest son, as if we could persuade ourselves in any way that such counsels are ratified and confirmed in your mind, but as a father loving the honour and welfare of his son, and solicitous concerning both of them, as soon as we saw the edict of the diet of Spire, we thought it our duty to warn you, and that the more gravely the more we were afraid of the peril to which you are exposed. In short, if we have at greater length dissuaded you from assuming power and authority to settle disputes in matters pertaining to religion, we have not written because we were not most desirous that disputes should be settled, (35.) (that this might be duly done, our conscience testifies we would willingly shed our life's blood,) but that we might admonish you by examples, drawn both from Scripture and from ecclesiastical history, not to arrogate to yourself, and order of your imperial authority, that which pertains not to your office. We exhort you rather to follow the example of Constantine the Great, a most distinguished servant of God, and a most happy Emperor, (36.) and leave those who are to be judged and chastised to their own judge and judges. For he, when requested by the priests themselves to judge in their disputes, positively declined. (37.) His words to this effect, as given by historical writers who were present,

are, "God has appointed you priests, and given you power to judge us also; therefore, we are rightly judged by you, whereas you cannot be judged by men; for which reason, wait for the judgment of God alone to decide between you, and let your quarrels, whatever they be, be reserved for that divine scrutiny." Thus spoke he who is surnamed Great, not so much for his power, which was most extensive, as for his piety and other virtues, and whom, Cæsar, it is our wish and desire that you should thoroughly resemble in all things. Your earnest desire that religious controversies be settled, and some strictness of discipline be renewed throughout the whole church, we highly applaud, and we beg of you to give your assistance in this matter, and give it to him to whom God has committed the care of this ministry. For, as it is our opinion, that in handling matters of this description, you, by no means, ought to act as the head, so we desire your assistance in particular, as that of a most appropriate arm. It is owing to this our desire, (38.) that on any, even the least hope of assembling an œcumenical council, we have always been not only prompt in summoning it, but whenever the smallest spark of hope that it could be assembled beamed forth, we instantly despatched legates, as we did also on the last occasion, though not with the success which we assiduously desire. Indeed, we have chosen to make every attempt rather than lose the very least opportunity. This we

continue to expect of the divine goodness. We earnestly long for a council, both for the sake of the interest of the whole church, and especially the famous German empire, which, long harassed in the extreme by discord in religious matters, is in a state of disunion, but whose safety we have always hoped (as your Majesty also admits) we may be able most conveniently to promote by a general council. (39.) In complaining as we now do, that you have used the counsels of those who have already been condemned by this see, we, indeed, complain, not merely because we are always desirous that they should be removed from your counsels, or because we ask, that those who have been once condemned remain ever condemned. God is our witness, that there is nothing we more long for than to bring back lost sheep to the fold of the Lord, and see the whole of that noble empire united in faith and religion, (40.) with the head and the rest of the body, in all love and friendship, and that for the reasons we have mentioned. But while they remain dissevered from the head and the rest of the body, (it is of such we speak,) while they are out of the church, being condemned by your edict also, you are setting more value on their friendship than you ought, and treating them with too much indulgence. Seeing that this your indulgence, and the declarations of former edicts which you have passed at different times, have not only not had the effect of bringing them to a sounder

mind, but rather, as the event has proved, furnished them with the occasion of becoming more insolent, and more bold in seizing on their neighbours' goods, you certainly seem, by this method, more to foment discord than to remove it. But that matters will be most effectually restored to a better condition, not by means inconsistent with the manners and customs of our forefathers, and with the divine law itself, but by a general council, we always have hoped in the Lord, and do hope even now; and, therefore, consulting the convenience of that province more than any other, we sent our legates (41.) to the entrance of Germany, even as far as Trent. Then we called, but there was none to hear. We came, and there was no man. Nevertheless we desist not, but we still call and cry to you and the other Princes, exclaiming with the prophet David, (42.) "Come let us lament before the Lord," (for there cannot be a more appropriate commencement of the council,) and with Daniel, "I pray for my own sins and those of the people. I accuse, confess, entreat. O Lord, we have sinned, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly, and gone backwards. To us belongeth confusion of face, and to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, for we have sinned, but to thee, O Lord, belong mercy and propitiation." To such a council, therefore, we invite you,—(43.) a council in which we hope to have the angels themselves for councillors. If they rejoice over one sinner

doing penitence, how much more will they rejoice over the whole church, of which they are themselves a part, when assembled for penitence? Moreover, while the safety of Christendom is threatened by the most powerful, and the perpetual enemy of the Christian name, the Turkish despot, we see not in what way it can be secured, unless by the united forces of Christians living in faith and charity. Wherefore, beloved son, pave the way for such a council, (this is your appropriate office,) and you will pave it, if you either, as much as in you lies, restore to Christendom a peace so earnestly desired by all, or at least establish a truce until the church can assemble a council. There your disputes may be decided more equitably than by violence. This do, both you and the other Christian princes, whom we will admonish again and again on this subject, and, in particular, him with whom you are at war. The council is now at hand, for it was long ago summoned, and has never been recalled, though, on account of the wars, deferred to a more convenient season. To this effect, therefore, dearest son, exert yourself, and give this joy first to Christendom, which has long been worn out by intestine wars, and next to us, having nothing on earth dearer than yourself, who in our love hold the place of a first born. Give this proof of divine virtue in you, not only not turning away from your father's affectionate admonition, as those do whom God, in testimony of desertion, gives up to their own devices, (44.) but regarding him as

sent to you at this time, by the command of God, to support you when falling, and free you from great peril to your soul's salvation; embrace him with all piety, listen cheerfully to his voice, and obey his admonitions. These you will duly obey, if, when human counsels, working on human frailty, have been able to turn you from the holy path, as the prophet calls it, (though it is indeed a king's highway, being that of your ancestors, most religious princes,) being warned, you instantly display your divine disposition, and seeing the truth, resolve that in things which pertain to religion you will not claim any right and authority, (45.)—if, following the divine institution and the practice of the church, you entirely exclude all discussions concerning priests and religion from Imperial Diets, (those not being present who have authority to take cognisance of such matters,) and refer them to their proper tribunal;—(46.) if, in regard to ecclesiastical property, of which the Lord himself, for whom it is preserved, has left and committed it to priests to judge, you give no decision, and laying arms aside, either study peace, or, if peace cannot otherwise be obtained, give power to the general council to judge of those points which have so long fomented pernicious wars in Christendom;—(47.) if, in fine, you rescind and nullify those concessions which, from excessive indulgence, you have made to the contumacious who are in rebellion against this holy see. For, dearest son, while these are things which bring

your own soul into great peril, and disturb the peace of the church more and more, you can easily understand, if you do not at the earliest remedy these evils, (as we hope you will,) to what straits you will reduce us, leaving us no alternative but either, to the very great detriment of the church, to be wanting to the duty and office given to us by God through his Son, or to act more severely than accords with either our practice, our nature, or our inclination. To our duty in such an emergency, we certainly ought not to be wanting, nor, in so far as we can promise for ourselves through the grace of Him whom on earth we represent, though unworthily, will we be wanting to it. For there is impressed upon our mind, and present to our eyes, the example which we mentioned at the outset—the example of divine severity toward Eli the priest, who, we read, was not condemned because he refrained altogether from correcting his sons; (it is plain enough, from Scripture, that he did correct them,) but because, as St. Jerome says, in correcting them he acted with the lenity of a father, not with the authority of a pontiff. So long as matters were entire we acted with the lenity of a father; but, if transactions are to take place in terms of the edict, (which God forbid,) I see well enough, from the example of Eli, the necessary steps which you will oblige us to take. Wherefore, Cæsar, consider with yourself what best becomes you, what best fulfils your duty towards God and the church, and what is most

conducive to your own honour and advantage. Is it to lend an arm to our justice in things which pertain to the unity of the church, or is it to favour those who, having once violated this unity, desire and labour miserably to rend it into a still greater number of parts?

May the God of peace, of his infinite mercy, deliver your majesty from the counsels of the wicked, and establish in your heart counsels of peace, that, being of one mind, we may with one mouth honour God the Father, through Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Holy Spirit, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Given at Rome on the Feast of St. Mark,
25th August, 1544.

LET

REMARKS
ON THE
LETTER OF POPE PAUL III.
BY
JOHN CALVIN.

REMARKS.

(1.) If the most holy father trembles at that example of the Divine vengeance, it is strange why he is so very solicitous about this one fault of the emperor, (if fault it should be called,) and slumbers so secure over the countless villanies of his own sons. God punished the negligence of Eli in not chastising his sons. The apostle Paul enjoins that the sons of a Christian pastor be well behaved, and well trained in the fear of the Lord. One Paul Farnese has a son, and by him grandsons, beside bastards, who still spring from the old dotard, and his half-rotten carcass. What kind of person is Pier-Luigi? I will say the severest of all the things which can be said, and yet most true—Italy never produced such a monster before! Paul, why do you not bestir yourself? When the execrable lusts of this your son have risen to heaven, when the land is polluted by their abomination, when the whole world is crying out, do you not think it time to exercise severity? What shall I say of his avarice? What of his rapacity? What of his cruelty? Although, in all these things, he has surpassed all others, he is still inferior to yourself. Then what has

the world long been indignantly saying of your grandsons, and of your whole family? If Eli was punished for indulgence, will you pass with impunity, when you not only in silence connive at the horrid crimes of your sons, but lend them a helping hand? When it is certain you openly approve, and as to a great part admit without disguise, that they perpetrate them at your instigation. Does not the justice of God here alarm you? Does no fear strike deep into your soul? But now more than enough of *actual* sons. You give out that you are the father of all Christians. In the deplorable corruption of the world, is there any room for taciturnity? You are silent, however, and though you know, and with your eyes see, that the world is rushing to destruction, you bear it in silence. If God did not spare Eli, what punishment, think you, is impending over yourself? I come nearer home. In what state is your see, which ought to be to you as a family? What are your vicars doing? What kind of traffic is going on in your court? How do your clergy comport themselves? What Sodom will you find for me, where there ever was greater impunity for all kinds of evil? More abandoned shamelessness? More unbridled licentiousness? And now, just as if you had nothing to do at home, you fear lest the wrath of God may be impending over your head for this one fault—if you silently allow peace and equality of rights to be conceded to the Protestants, until the question of religion shall

be discussed; if you tolerate Cæsar in promising, without your order, a council, as well as a legitimate determination of the cause.

(2.) Here Athaliah comes into my mind. For, as that abandoned woman, when she saw king Joash placed upon the throne, felt that her own tyranny had fallen, and cried out, "Treason! treason!" (2 Kings xi. 14;) so this vile priest, when he sees even the smallest infringement on the tyranny, which, against the will of God and man, he most impiously arrogates to himself, confounds heaven and earth, as if nothing in the world were any longer safe.

(3.) O how many signal proofs has Cæsar received of this paternal love! Did not Christian princes dread this idol as some sinister deity, they might disclose strange offices of charity which each has individually experienced at his hand. But what need is there to divulge the secrets of princes, as if it were not plain to the humblest individual what kind of father he has hitherto shown himself to be?

(4.) Once, indeed, the specious gloss of the Romish harlot was the boasted unity of the Church, but it has now been worn off by long use. It has so often been blown away by the blast of the Lord's mouth, and so effaced by the clear testimony of Scripture, that she is no longer able with it to hide her ugliness even from the blind. For Christ is the only bond of holy unity. He who departs from him disturbs and violates unity, while out of

him there is nothing but sacrilegious conspiracy. Roman antichrist invites us to himself, under the pretence of unity, and pronounces all to be schismatics who do not spontaneously submit to be harnessed to the yoke of his tyranny. We, however, on the other hand, hear the words of Christ, "where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." We hear the Spirit exhorting us to be "of one heart, of one mind," but in Christ. We hear the pious admonition of Hilary, "The name of peace is, indeed, specious, and the idea of unity beautiful, but who knows not that the only united peace of the Church and the gospel is that which is of Christ?" Let Farnese then show that Christ is on his side, and he will prove that the unity of the Church is with him. But seeing it is impossible to adhere to him without denying Christ, he who turns aside from him makes no departure from the Church, but discriminates between the true Church and a church adulterous and false.

(5.) According to the definition of Farnese, the order, the discipline, the perfection of Christianity, consist in allowing the tyranny of his see to remain untouched. All other things may go; for, compared with these, he counts them all as nothing. Here, then, we recognise the Helen for whom he fights, and at the same time the cause of the fear which he expressed at the outset. For he not only foresees ruin impending over his throne, but he feels that, unless he bestir himself, his seat

of abomination is already overthrown. Allow him, as of old, to wanton secure in the tranquil possession of his tyranny, and he will be content. As if the state of the Church were duly settled, he will congratulate himself and all other men. Though Rome be a sink of wickedness scarcely better than hell itself, though the holy papal clergy, with loosened reins, breaking through all laws, and casting off all sense of honour, prostitute themselves to every kind of impiety, though the whole world be fearfully corrupt, there will, notwithstanding, be a well-ordered discipline, provided nothing is attempted against the majesty of the Romish see!

(6.) No doubt, it is a heinous crime, that when the assembling of a council was considered, the name of the Pope should have been suppressed! As if Constantine had bestowed on Sylvester the privilege of convening the Council of Arles, and had not called it, of his own right, in the exercise of his imperial authority, and as if he had not summoned Sylvester himself to come; or as if Theodosius had waited for either the determination or the nod of the Roman bishop in calling the Council of Aquileia, over which Ambrose presided. In this instance, there was held in Italy a general council, at which the Roman bishop was not present, and no one in his name; nay, in the acts of that council he is never once mentioned. But we must pardon Farnese when he acts the part of wicked Jezebel, seeing he has a similar cause. For, in

the same way in which she clamoured when Ahab of his royal authority assembled the people, that it might be determined once for all whether God or Baal were to be worshipped, so this worthless man clamours as if every thing were lost, and a great crime committed, because the emperor has undertaken to provide for the assembling of a council. But then he alleges, that both by divine and human law this power is competent only to himself! It is easy to throw out the assertion, but we desiderate the proof. Was there ever a more impudent falsehood than this? Not a single syllable of divine law can he produce, unless, indeed, he make out that he himself is God. But perhaps human law favours him? Not one whit more. For who called the first Council of Nice, and who called those of Ephesus, of Constantinople, of Chalcedon? And, not to be tedious in enumerating, who, for whole five hundred years, assembled all the general councils that were held during that period, but the emperor alone? But, perhaps, it was done after the Pope had interposed his authority. Nay, even without his consent. Will Farnese show, that in this matter the nod of the Pope was waited for, or even his advice asked? But he now not only arrogates to himself this privilege, so that the emperor must not attempt any thing without consulting him, but he insists, at the same time, that there is nothing which he cannot and will not do. To obtain this, he must previously abolish all acts of

councils, and all ancient history. For by these, it is not the Pope who issues edicts to the emperor, but the emperor to all bishops. And when the bishops speak, they declare that they were summoned not by the command or beck of the Roman bishop, but by imperial edict. On one occasion, indeed, in procuring the synod of Chalcedon, Leo interfered. But in what way? In ordering, or decreeing? There is nothing to that effect in his letters, which are extant, and may easily be seen; but by humbly entreating the emperor to summon all the bishops, according to custom. The thing, therefore, which Leo then earnestly entreated, when done in the present day, Farnese makes the ground of a bitter charge, maintaining it to be almost a species of apostasy. Let him, therefore, seek support for his fictitious authority in some other quarter than from either God or man.

(7.) In one instance, where the Pope made some such claim in the council of Carthage, the African bishops stoutly, as became them, withstood his dishonest ambition, and when he pretended that jurisdiction over the churches was given him by a canon of the council of Nice, they gave no credit to it, but sent to Constantinople, and other Greek cities, to investigate the fact. Ultimately, it was discovered that the acts of the council had been corrupted by the most Holy Father, that he might employ them in rearing up his tyranny; at least the copies which were produced from his archives did not correspond

with copies that were certainly genuine. Accordingly, his demand was rejected, not without strong suspicion of forgery. But he says, that here also laws human and divine support him. What God, pray, ever appointed the Pope examiner, arbiter, and judge of all causes relating to the church or to faith? And what laws of men, what decrees can he produce to that effect? Ambrose, indeed, says, that questions of faith ought to be discussed in the church in presence of the people; and the question then under discussion was the leading article of our faith. He does not say before the Pope's tribunal. I admit, he says, that they are to be judged by priests, but he by no means gives the judgment to one Pope. Had he done so, he must have sinned grievously, when at the council of Aquileia he was not only present at the investigation of a most important cause, but actually presided. Let Farnese inveigh against Ambrose for having dared, after he had persuaded the Emperor to summon a council, to hold it, though in the absence of the Roman bishop, and there determine the view which ought to be taken of our Saviour's divinity. Where, I ask, were the human laws of which Farnese boasts, when in Italy a general council treated of the essentials of religion, no doubt, after inviting the Roman bishop, but when no one compeared in his stead? Where, too, when a cause of the greatest moment was carried from Melchiades, the Roman bishop, to the bishop of Arles? Donatus of Casa Nigra had

a dispute with Cecilianus. It was not a civil matter, but an ecclesiastical cause, and embraced no unimportant articles of Christian doctrine, viz., the unity of the church, and the communion of saints. Constantine the great had first made Melchiades judge, but after he had given judgment, the case was carried, on the appeal of Donatus, to the bishop of Arles. Such is the testimony of Augustine. Why did not Melchiades protest that every thing was wickedly thrown into confusion, when supreme judicial authority was wrested from him? It remains, therefore, for Farnese to show to those who take him for an oracle, that he is Cephas the head.

(8.) As if the Emperor had wished the decision to be given according to the caprice of each individual, and not to be taken from the holy word of God, after duly weighing both sides of the question! As if, too, he had committed to laics the office of deciding for themselves, and not rather of inquiring into what was taught by the word of God. If this fact is new to Farnese, he must have very little acquaintance with antiquity.

(9.) If this view of Farnese is adopted, there will be no occasion for a council. The matter will be quickly despatched, if those who come forward to give an account of their doctrine are, while the cause is unpleaded, to be declared assertors of damnable heresies. Nor, in sooth, does the most holy father act imprudently. For, what more desirable than to slay your enemies with a single word?

But there is this inconvenience, that those who are so atrociously condemned, nobly and strenuously defend themselves against the calumny, while, at the same time, they charge home upon the Pope himself the guilt not only of impiety, and wickedness of every kind, but prove him to be antichrist, the head of all the wicked.

(10.) What? Is not good king Josiah eulogized by the Holy Spirit, because, when he saw the offerings consumed by the priests, he appointed his scribe to reckon with them? (2 Kings xii. 10.) Where, then, the sin should Christian princes in the present day, after his example, when they see the resources of the church engulfed in the whirlpools of the Pope, and shamefully squandered with the greatest villany, put forth their hands to stop the sacrilege? The first question here is, to what use is the property of the church destined? the second, to whom belongs its administration? and the third, if the ordinary administration is vicious, and calls for thorough correction, by whom is the remedy to be applied? It is on the last of these that the Emperor has promised to take the sense of the states, and we can easily understand what cause Farnese has to make an uproar.

(11.) An epithet must be supplied; for Protestants are out of a church, but it is the Popish church. They were condemned, but it was without being heard. If, however, it be true, that wherever the pure truth of Christ, together with an entire consent in mind and

doctrine with all the godly in Christ, exists, there, too, the real unity of the church exists, Protestants assuredly are not aliens from the church.

(12.) Nay, what man, whether prince or private individual, if he has only a spark of Christian zeal, desires not that a state of matters so deplorable should, with all possible despatch, be relieved? Who does not perceive that it is vain to look for any help from the Pope? He, therefore, who is offended that a remedy so necessary has been sought out by the Emperor, can only betray his own impiety. But it is well he immediately after declares that he was speaking of certain hired slaves.

(13.) I should like to know which of these things is repugnant to the institution of Christ, and to right order in the church. I know they are said to be so, but by whom? If the devil is the father of lies, who will put any faith in his vicar?

(14.) Truly a strange metamorphosis! The Pope begins to be so religious, that he is horrified when he hears that peace has been made with Protestants. But it is strange, on the other hand, that he quietly bargains with courtesans, and dreads no contamination from the pay of panderism, that he lets the Jews off for an annual pension, permitting them not only with impunity to despise the Christian name, but to commit open robbery by their usury; in fine, that he has no aversion even to the Turks. But his holiness

appears, especially in this, that he is afraid, with the apostle Paul, lest evil communications corrupt good manners. Wicked apostate! Nay, prince of all apostasy! What hast thou to do with the holy sentiment of the apostle, who, after spending days with villanous advisers in scheming treachery, in coining fraud, in kindling up wars, in devising new kinds of rapine, in plotting the destruction of the innocent, in pulling down the church, and putting religion to flight, then spend the rest of your time with epicures, in sensual indulgence; or amid a tribe of harlots wallow in the mire, neither speaking nor hearing any thing that does not either breathe execrable impiety, or by its obscenity stimulate those vile passions, which, though enfeebled, yet have not altogether ceased to act.

(15.) We must be all attention, for there now seems to be something in his complaint. I admit, indeed, that church order is so important in the sight of God, that he who invades another's office cannot escape punishment for his temerity.

(16.) If there were any rational ground for preserving the tyranny for which Farnese now contends, the most valid of all would be that no one might dare to interfere with the correction of priests. If, therefore, we concede to Farnese, that it is an unlawful usurpation, that it is great sacrilege for princes, when the Pope is lethargic, and the whole clergy yawning, to attempt to relieve the perishing church, the question is decided, and

the Emperor cannot exculpate himself from this serious charge. But, although it is not every man's business to engage in removing the corruptions of the church, and restoring it to its proper state, how can this right justly be denied to Christian Princes? Farnese objects, that by so doing they invade the sacerdotal chair. But it always seemed otherwise to the Holy Fathers, who held no practice more ancient than for princes to employ their authority in reducing careless and dishonest priests to order, and in depriving of their dignities such as were unworthy of them. Farnese, therefore, labours under a hallucination, when he does not see how great a difference there is between the two things, between occupying the chair, and appointing proper persons to sit in it, there to rule with reason and justice.

(17.) This much all concede—that there is an order in the church. The whole question, therefore, depends on the definition of order. Order requires that there be distinct functions. We grant this. But distinction is not inconsistent with union. There is nothing to prevent those who hold different offices from accomplishing many things by common exertions, by jointly rolling the same stone; in a word, nothing to prevent one, in any urgent necessity, from sometimes taking the place of another.

(18.) Let Farnese then grant to us that the state of the church was ordered according to the will of Christ, and we will readily

grant, that whoever presumes to touch it even with his little finger, with the view of uprooting it, is chargeable with impious audacity. But, since that barbarian, or rather brute-like confusion of the Papacy, is far remote from the holy rule of Christ, have done with this misapplication of the term "Divine Providence," to which a grievous insult is offered, when it is erroneously and impudently employed to cloak a tyranny, utterly at variance with the kingdom of Christ.

(19.) Uzzah was punished because he presumed to put forth his hand to the ark of God, from well-intentioned but inconsiderate zeal, namely, by taking upon him the duty of the priests, while they were standing near and ready to perform it. Where now, among the whole popish clergy, is there one priest who is intent on supporting the ark of the Lord? Uzzah was punished, because both at variance with his vocation, and against the clear prohibition of God, he broke through and touched the ark. Where the interdict of God, where the strictly defined vocation, which debars the Emperor from caring for the church? Isaiah calls upon all kings to undertake that care. (Is. xlix. 23.) Uzzah was punished, because, prematurely, with unseasonable fervour, he rushed in to support the ark. But how different the case, when David, finding the ark lying on the ground covered with mire, exposed to the affronts of the ungodly, attempts to raise it up, and issues an edict, calling upon the priests to bring it up to its

place. But how dare a harpy like you order others to remove their hands from the ark!—you, who, after throwing it down with your impure beak, are ignominiously trampling it under your feet? Can it be lawful for you to fill the ark of God with abominations, to profane it with the greatest contumely, to prostitute it to any mockery of Satan, to rend it into pieces, and insult its sanctity? and must it be impious for Princes, and the whole Christian people, to cleanse away its impurities, to replace its parts, and draw near to put it in repair?

(20.) What will not this madman dare, who is not ashamed to compare himself to Moses and Aaron? He says that Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, came to a fearful end, because they murmured against the priests of the Lord. But in what is it that you resemble Moses? Are you a priest of the Lord, you who put every thing sacred to flight? Jehu not only stirred up a tumult against the priests of Baal, but pursuing them sword in hand, slew the whole of them in the temple of their idol. A noble deed approved by the testimony of God! Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, wounded Moses only with their tongue, and the earth swallowed them alive. Be you, therefore, different from what you are, before you debar princes from assailing you, by claiming the rights and honours of the priesthood.

(21.) The priesthood of Aaron “served a shadow,” but contained within it no vain

emblem of the truth, and was founded on the sacred authority of God. But does the Pope exhibit any thing except a mask? On what foundation does his tyranny lean? In fine, by whose authority, from the highest to the least, are priests initiated in their sacrilegious function by a magical rather than a Christian rite? Do their utmost, they will never support the kind of priesthood on which they plume themselves by a single syllable of Scripture.

(22.) A perverse custom is nothing more than an ancient error. But, at any rate, who will admit it to be a custom of the church, that those who have the name of prelates, be their characters and conduct what they may, though there is nothing they less resemble than the name they bear, may go about as they list, devouring the flock of Christ, while no man must dare to oppose their robbery? In what Barbary, pray, could this custom prevail, that banditti, under the protection of a name, might with impunity, and without restriction, destroy, kill, waste and squander, and whenever any one uttered a whisper about curbing their villany, might raise a clamour, and accuse him of confounding things sacred and profane?

(23.) When these three things have been made clear, viz. *first*, That the emperor has undertaken the reformation of the church, not from necessity, but from presumption; *secondly*, That the church has been committed to priests in such a sense, that all whose hands

are not anointed are kept aloof from it, just as from offering incense; and, *thirdly*, That the papal priesthood, equally with the Levitical, has its honour from God, the example of Uzzah will perhaps apply to the present case. On the other hand, if none of these things is clear, and it can be readily evinced that the emperor had no alternative but to interfere, unless he was willing, while in perfect knowledge, to wink at the destruction of the church, and that nothing was more appropriate to his character, whereas the papal priesthood is consecrated by nothing better than sacrilege and anathema, what support does the example of Uzzah give to Farnese? Let him, I say, show that the power of convening a council, and of restoring the church to its true condition, is committed to priests alone, like the burning of incense, but is forbidden to kings. Here truth openly remonstrates. Let him show that the emperor causelessly interferes, and while matters are well arranged, is led on merely by ambition, or a depraved love of change. Let him show that the emperor has thrust aside the lawful priest, and is violently seizing upon an altar interdicted to him. But where is the priest who stands ready to perform the duty? Where the barriers by which the pious solicitude of the emperor is excluded, so that it must not break through; and where the temerity or licentiousness of attempting a work, which to decline would be at once the greatest heartlessness and perfidy? It may be worth while

here to notice the acute reasoning of Farnese's scribe. To enact laws concerning religion is, he says, sacrifice, and sacrifice most acceptable to God; and, therefore, it is altogether inconsistent with the emperor's office. This, however, is not to argue, but to throw every thing into confusion, as swine do. For what is it to give alms? What to devote one's self to the public good? What to confine the people to the pure worship of God? What, in fine, to dedicate ourselves to God? Are not these too sacrifices, and sacrifices of a sweet and grateful odour? And yet they are common to all the pious. And, moreover, what babbling to say that the enacting of laws respecting religion is a thing pleasing to God, when Scripture proclaims it to be the offspring of diabolical presumption? It is the duty of Cæsar, and of all mankind, to listen to only one Legislator, in every thing which pertains to the internal government of the soul, and to submit, without exception, to all the laws which He has decreed.

(24.) Not contented with the prerogative of priests, Farnese mounts an eminence of his own—"Ours," says he, "in particular." By what right?—because to us has been given the power of binding and loosing. What, then, to others? for it was said at the same time to all the apostles, "Whatsoever ye shall bind." That which Christ communicates to all, will you, with predatory violence, seize for yourself? Will you strip the church naked that you may clothe yourself in her spoils?

(25.) Truly an excellent privilege—that priests may rush with impunity into all kinds of wickedness, and judgment be left to God alone. But if it is so, to what end that ancient discipline of the clergy, which, though now existing only in written documents, once was practised in the church? When bishops assume to themselves the sole right of passing judgment on priests, they endeavour, after the manner of the giants, to push God from his seat. But such permission has been given to bishops. Where? If God has claimed it for himself alone, are not you, in transferring it to priests, just making them gods? Is not this, too, wondrously acute? “I will require it of pastors,” saith the Lord; therefore, cognisance belongs only to God, and no man may lawfully assume it, even for a time. What! does not the Lord also require the blood of the innocent at the hand of murderers? Does not he require thefts, rapine, and all injuries whatsoever? Does he not require of the wicked all the wickedness which they may have perpetrated? Therefore, (according to this drivelling logic of Farnese,) let judgment be abolished; let the punishment of crimes cease; for judgment must be left to God alone. Surely this judgment of God alone is not over priests only, but over all men, whatever be their station. And why are princes called gods, but just because judgment has been committed to them?

(26.) What angel, or rather what demon, revealed this to Farnese? Since the judg-

ments of God proceed on various grounds, who can, at his own hand, determine the particular ground? Solomon certainly denies that human intellect can discern when it is that God visits in love, and when in hatred, saying, that "all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked." (Eccles. ix. 2.) The fact must, therefore, be determined by the word of God, but Farnese remembers well whose person he represents. For, on one occasion, the devil, whom he serves, thus stipulated with Christ, "All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." So also Farnese's predecessors. When we served the Queen of heaven, "then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil." (Jer. xlv. 17.) But let us now hear the rewards which he affirms to have been conferred for worshipping his see, and the punishments inflicted for contempt of it.

(27.) He adduces Constantine the Great, with the view of making us give credit to the fictitious donation of which he boasts. So shameless is he, that silly tales, which even children now laugh at, he hesitates not to obtrude on the Emperor as sure oracles. Once, indeed, the foolish canonists with solemn brow prated of this figment, but there is no longer any room for such absurdities. On what account, moreover, does he make Theodosius to be so faithful a worshipper of his see? Though that Emperor paid singular respect to Ambrose, it is no where read

that he ever held in estimation either the Roman chair, or those who sat in it. It is certainly strange, that Farnese did not add Trajan to his list! Then, what kind of pretext has he for referring the victories of Charlemagne to one superstition or crafty design, viz., his exaltation of the seat of abomination? When out of the many heroic and memorable acts of Charlemagne he singles out the fault, he just does as those do who among gold gather nothing but dross.

(28.) Who would not say, that the barking of this impure dog should be put down by sticks and stones rather than words, when he ascribes the divine vengeance inflicted on Justinian, not to the manifest impiety which he displayed in supporting the Eutychian heresy, but solely to his contumacy in impairing the majesty of the Roman see? Anastasius, too, impugns the orthodox faith. He is professedly the favourer and assertor of an execrable blasphemy against Christ. He does what in him lies to overturn a pious and salutary doctrine concerning the mystery of incarnation. He disturbs the whole church, and dismembers it by pernicious dissensions. At length, struck by lightning, he comes to a miserable end. Farnese pronounces the sole cause of his death to be his rebellion against Gelasius and Hormisdas. Does any man believe it?

(29.) Mauritius, now an old man, after he had held the empire for twenty years, is insidiously and most perfidiously assassinated

by Phocas his general. Farnese, as if he had been present at the counsels of God, interprets this death to have been a punishment for contempt of the Roman see. It were to be wished, indeed, that a Prince, otherwise quiet and peaceful, had not mixed himself up with the depraved factions of the bishops, or had chosen to repress rather than to favour the ambition of John. But the question should be, why did Gregory then ask, not why would Mauritius not permit, that any one should be regarded as universal bishop, since this title was, as he says, nefarious, iniquitous, profane, abominable, and the forerunner of antichrist? But, to pass over this too, where is the equity of Farnese, when, in speaking of a Prince who was villainously murdered, he condemns him merely because he did not show himself obsequious to the Roman see, and lauds a parricide who drew his sword against a master from whom he had received the greatest kindness, and thus by perfidy, and an abominable crime obtained the empire; lauds him because he showed greater willingness to deck the Roman idol and exalt its power? And yet what other object had Phocas in all his largesses to the Roman see, than to purchase, as by nefarious paction, the favour of the city of Rome, because he knew that he was deservedly detested by the Greeks?

(30.) It is strange that when the pay is so good, Farnese does not procure more learned scribes. For what ignorance of history does

it betray, first, to blunder shamefully in the names, setting down Constans for Justinian; and, secondly, while all the Greek Emperors were in the same condition, to mention it as the condition only of a few? But, perhaps, this is artfully done, because he could not find in others any punishment which he might employ as a bugbear.

(31.) The vices of Henry's character it is not necessary here to extenuate. But if it be inquired, what were the seeds of contention between him and Hildebrand, and in what way the strife was conducted, it will assuredly be found that Hildebrand, a man of a crafty and malicious temper, inflamed with an insatiable ambition, and possessing, moreover, both the confidence and excessive cruelty, of a gladiator, seeing Henry dissipating himself in luxury, and while abandoned to his passions, still haughty and ferocious, adopted the resolution of dismembering the empire. By what engines, then, did he assail Henry? What arm did he use to the very last, in order to crush him? Having absolved the German Princes from their allegiance, *i. e.*, granted them a license to commit perjury, influenced some by false terrors, intimidated others by menaces, corrupted others by flattery, and amused the elector of Bavaria with the hopes of the empire, suddenly with intestine war, as with one great conflagration, he set all Germany in a blaze. When Henry suppliantly approached and threw himself prostrate before him, he spurned him

with the utmost haughtiness. And he set no bounds to his passionate and intolerable pride, until he had both the Emperor and the empire at his feet. It seemed a small matter only to have Cæsar for his vassal. He must, also, after destroying the empire, be sole tyrant. And yet Farnese has the hardihood to make mention of a history which clearly testifies, or rather is an indubitable proof, that never, out of the infernal regions, did there exist monsters so foul, as that their foulness is not surpassed by the flagitiousness of the Roman see.

(32.) Why did he not also put Frederick I. into his list? Nay, why did he not frame a long catalogue of emperors? The more mildly any emperor conducted himself, the more arrogantly the Roman antichrists took advantage of his disposition, making no scruple of shamefully insulting him, while any, who with somewhat more spirit, withstood their insolence, were made to feel what it was to provoke the rage of furious beasts. It being clear that your predecessors, Farnese, insulted the Cæsars, and that, for the most part, without provocation, by their more than unbridled lust, their more than a tyrant's cruelty, and their ungovernable fury, will you, too, presume to charge our emperor as guilty before God, because he has not allowed himself to be trampled upon by savage beasts? Is it thus, impious man, you would make God at once the supporter and minister of your iniquity?

(33.) I indeed admit that dire vengeance from God impends over all who make it their endeavour to violate the unity of the Church. But what greater violation of unity, than when purity of doctrine is adulterated, and agreement in it destroyed, and Christ, in consequence, torn as it were to pieces? And who, Farnese, but yourself, is the author and high priest of this dismemberment? I know it is not your fault that we do not all preach one head upon earth, one Roman see, as mother and queen, but whose fault is it but yours that we do not all from the heart confess one God and one faith, as we have all one baptism? But why do you call that the principal see, which, destitute now for above eight hundred years of a true bishop, first gave a place to dead images, and is at this day occupied by a leader in impiety, a most cruel tyrant of souls, an inveterate enemy of Christ, a prime devastator of the Church?

(34.) There cannot be the least doubt that the Jews are suffering merited punishment for despising and opposing Christ. The Greeks, too, are oppressed by a cruel and miserable bondage, but the cause is obscure, if we do not search for it in the word of God. Farnese conjectures that it has happened because of their rebellion against the holy see. If I may conjecture, I would rather suppose it to have happened because they carried their pride to such a height, that they were the first to aspire to that tyranny over the whole Church which the Pope now usurps; because, from

excessive fondness for novelty, they broke down into various sects; and because, from depraved ambition to signalize themselves by something better than the sacred institutions of Christ, they degenerated from the pure standard of the gospel. Which of these two conjectures is the more probable? It is certain that the faults which I assign as the cause are condemned by the judgment of God. But if men are to be listened to, while, out of their own brain, they invent any kind of causes, with no less plausibility might the Greeks, while the power and majesty of their empire were unimpaired, have upbraided the Romans with suffering the punishment of their rebellion, for having resisted the see of Constantinople in the dispute concerning the primacy; although as I observed, when that dispute was first agitated, the Roman bishop did not aspire to primacy, but only maintained that his own place was not inferior to that of the bishop of Constantinople. In one word, Farnese would fain persuade us, that the only sin in the world deserving of the divine wrath, deserving of all punishments, in short, the source of all evil, is, that all men do not show obsequiousness to him, do not hang upon his nod, do not worship him as a God. Who but a madman will allow himself to be persuaded of this? But were all men disposed to believe it, it is incumbent on him, first, to show what similar demerits the Hungarians have, whose condition is in no respect better than that of the Greeks. Explain to us, I

say, by what fault of theirs the Hungarians have been brought into the same servitude with the Greeks, though you have always abused them as if they had been the vilest bondmen, and they, just like slaves, confined in their workshops, and working in chains, have resisted none of your commands. How childishly then you trifle when, as if it were a settled point, you haughtily declare, that the tyranny of your see was never spurned with impunity? But it is certain that Christ was not slightly moved at the contempt shown to his vicegerent! How dare you, with polluted lips, thus insult Christ? First, Who exalted you to this honour? For, as an Apostle declares, no man ought to assume honour to himself. (Heb. v. 4.) It was said to Peter, "Feed my sheep." (John xxi. 17.) True, but the same thing was said to all. That ancient smoke, by which you were wont to blind the eyes of men, has long since vanished away. With what face, then, dare you arrogate to yourself so proud a title—a title which were any angel to claim, he would deserve to be anathematized? In the opinion of Gregory, (your predecessor, as you boast,) any man who should make himself universal bishop, were he Roman or not, was wicked, impious, sacrilegious, the vicar of Satan, and the precursor of antichrist. You must, therefore, either condemn Gregory as a blasphemer of your see, or bear the burden of his heavy sentence. But now to spare this execrable blasphemy, let us assume that the doctrine

which Cyprian teaches on the authority of the Apostles and Prophets, is false, viz. that there is one bishopric in the Church of Christ, part of which bishopric each bishop holds entire, and let us grant that supremacy is transferred to some one individual, by what right, or semblance of right, can it be claimed by one so desperately abandoned as you? You the successor of Peter, you, who have no more resemblance to him than any Nero, or Domitian, or Caligula! But, perhaps, you would rather have me name Heliogabalus, who added to the empire a new priesthood. All these emperors were unquestionably high priests in name, for the superstition of the time so allowed, but you now usurp the name among a Christian people, contrary to law and justice, contrary to the inviolable decree of Christ, and contrary to the injunctions of all the holy Fathers. You, the vicegerent of Christ! you, whose every thought, and wish, and action, are directed to the extinction of Christ, provided only the empty name remain, with which, as with a meretricious glare, you may deceive us! You, the vicegerent of Christ, whom now the very children all know to be antichrist! What kind of Christ will you fabricate for us, if you wish his image to be represented in your tyranny? We see a high priest of all impiety, a standard-bearer of Satan, a fierce tyrant, a cruel murderer of souls, in short, the son of perdition, whom the Apostle describes; and must we regard him as the vicegerent of Christ? We see, I say,

the wolf by which the sheep of Christ are devoured, we see the thief by whom they are carried off, we see the prowler by whom they are slain, and still must we esteem him the vicegerent of Christ?

(35.) Themistocles, when about to offer a sacrifice to Justice, is said to have exclaimed, "O goddess, if thou any where exist!" When the Pope calls his conscience as a witness, must we not ask where it exists? Orators sometimes call up from the infernal regions those whose personal presence they judge appropriate to their cause, but there is no room for this in the case of the Pope, for whom there is neither a heaven nor a hell. It is only for him, then, who holds this chimaera in his hands, to believe that Farnese will cheerfully shed his blood for the peace of the church. But if we look to the fact, we will find that though Paul Farnese knows what it is to shed the blood of others, he has learned to spare his own. Certainly, if it could have been believed up to this time that there was a particle of conscience still remaining in a Pope, his manifest perjury, in this instance, would make it clear how completely he has shaken himself free both from fear of God and regard for man.

(36.) An equitable provision doubtless, that the Protestants shall be given up to the Pope for judgment! Why? For he says he is their judge. Sole judge? He assumes at his council, as co-adjutors, his own venerable brethren, whom he also besprinkles with a portion of

honour ! Is it that the flock of sheep may be delivered to as many wolves ? Whatever their character be, they are the persons to take cognizance ! If on one occasion Paul was entitled to say, "I wist not, brethren, that it was the high priest," what are we entitled in the present day to say of these fierce vultures ? In one word, I would only say, let them show themselves to be the Lord's priests, and I will, without difficulty, concede to them the power of judging. But seeing plainly what they are, I am entitled again and again to ask who appointed them judges or rulers ?

(37.) The honourable title which the Holy Spirit bestows on princes and civil magistrates, (as is evident, both from the passage itself, and also from the interpretation of Christ,) Constantine, who was not well read in the Scriptures, and if his history speaks true, was then a catechumen, transferred by mistake to the priests. Farnese thinks, that in calling in its aid, he has found the shield of Achilles. The point then to be determined is, to which of the two, to God or Constantine, we are to give credit, in interpreting the meaning of these words, "I said ye are gods?" At the same time, I admit that when Constantine saw the bishops inflamed with a kind of deadly rage, lacerating each other, sparing Arius, and deserting the cause of Christ, in order that they might indulge their own passions, he acted prudently in refusing to have any thing to do with their libels.

But how far Constantine was from being of Farnese's mind, and how false Farnese is in sheltering himself under his name, may easily be judged from his letter to the Nicomedians, as given in the first book of Theodoret. "If," says he, "we have Christian, orthodox, and modest bishops, we rejoice. But if any one shall unadvisedly and presumptuously employ himself in fomenting disturbances, his presumption must be checked by the servant of God, *i. e.*, by my executive authority." Since Farnese wishes our Emperor Charles to make Constantine in all respects his model, he cannot object to allow, not merely his presumption, but his unbridled rage, to be curbed by his hand.

(38.) It is true Farnese has sometimes made a show of calling a council, but any one who believes that he ever thought seriously of holding a council, has not a particle of soundness in his brain. He knows that the world, as if famishing, has long been gaping eagerly for a council, and he knows that all accuse him of extreme cruelty, in so long dragging out the time by endless evasions. Why not, then, when it can cost him nothing, satisfy the ignorant by now and then summoning a council? If any man wonder why the Pope is so much afraid of a council, though no good man will find a place in it, let him hence consider how monstrous a species of tyranny that must be, which can only be maintained in fear and terror.

(39.) Here we see what it is that alarms the most holy father. He does not wish the cause of the Protestants to be managed in the way of hearing and discussing, but thinks the most convenient plan would be to begin by condemning them; although, indeed, he will scarcely honour them so far as to begin anew to take up a cause which he has already decided, but will order the sentence already passed to be executed. And, certainly, he does not consult ill for his own schemes, when he anxiously avoids the discussion of a cause so full of doubt and peril to himself. What, then, is left to the Protestants, even were audience allowed them, but to abandon their defence, and yield up to him their persons and their all?

(40.) It were indeed desirable that all the Germans would sincerely unite in adopting a pure faith, and cling together under one common head, namely, Christ; nay, that the whole world could be brought to this unity, so accomplishing that which undoubtedly constitutes the true perfection of the church, forming one sheepfold under one shepherd. But the Pope objects, because it is nothing to him that one God be acknowledged by all, and the whole world governed by the pure doctrine and under the auspices of Christ, if he himself is not adored as head. Therefore, although he who has no God cannot, without falsehood, call God to witness, still, lest you should suppose that he is al-

ways false, there is one thing which he here affirms truly, viz., that there is nothing he more longs for, than to bring back under his yoke all those who have thrown it off, and whom he regards as incorrigible.

(41.) As if he had called the council with any hope of assembling it, and had not rather intentionally selected the time which would be most unsuitable for a peaceful consultation. When he was well aware that the two principal monarchs of the Christian world were kept asunder by war, and that in several places the trumpet for battle was almost sounding, then he pretended that he wished to hold a council. For how came it to pass that he abandoned it when affairs were tranquil? After making a fluster for some time with summoning a council, first to meet at Mantua, and afterwards at Verona, both of them vanished into a bull; and now, in unsettled times, amidst the sound of arms, he bestirs himself as if he had found the fittest opportunity!

(42.) O abandoned impudence! It is strange, that, during the writing of this passage, he did not order his scribe to groan and squeeze one little tear from his left eye. But he is not less foolish than dishonest in acting this play before the emperor, as if the emperor did not know him. Let him, therefore, look out for a stranger. And yet where will he find one, though he search from east to west, who does not know that he cheats both

God and man? But to proceed, to what place does he summon the council?—to Trent. He will be clever, indeed, if he finds the Germans so silly, as of their own accord to throw themselves into the wolves' jaws. How will the council be composed? Of Milesians, beyond a doubt, who cannot bear even the shadow of a good man among them. What equity or moderation in conducting the investigation? Perhaps they will come, honest and unbiassed by prejudice, to calm and pious deliberation. Nay, Farnese even now says that the cause which is to be brought under discussion is already condemned. It would be superfluous, therefore, to spend one little hour in discussing it. However, not to seem too stern or too cruel, they will gravely set themselves to hear—"Go, officer, call the Protestants; if they desire to propose any thing to the council, let them give the substance of it in an humble petition, that they may not offend the delicate ears of the holy fathers." Having heard the demands of the petitioners, it will be convenient, first of all, to ascertain whether they concede to the holy fathers, without challenge, the power of judging them and their doctrine; and next, whether, abandoning the reformation which they have established, and abjuring the doctrine which they have embraced, they are prepared to reinstate, as before their banishment, the faith and all the ritual of the holy Romish see. If they hesitate as to the former, they will immediately

be declared schismatics; if they refuse to do the latter, they will be twice heretics. It will, therefore, be necessary to determine forthwith how their contumacy is to be punished. For it will be unlawful to touch a single matter, unless the church is restored out and out. Meanwhile, the Christian world being distracted by a civil war persecuting and oppressing the Protestants, the reformation of the church will be delayed. The venerable clergy, however, will not be idle. There will every where be need of many bellows to blow the fire. But after they have once returned to tranquil possession, should any one dare to make any further mention of convening a council, he will be proclaimed by all with one mouth a turbulent, a seditious fellow, and an enemy of unity. It is certain, according to Farnese's view, even the emperor himself could not attempt it with impunity. Let leave, however, be granted to the emperor to petition for a council, still it will be free to the Pope to refuse; and having met with a refusal, let him beware of going a step further, unless he wishes to suffer the punishment of his presumption after the manner of Uzziah, or to come to some other dreadful end. Of the ordering of the council I will speak by and by, if I find time.

(43.) Who can now wonder that the Pope claims primacy over every description of mortals, since he here makes himself the president of angels also? But I fear I may have been

misled by an ambiguity in the name. I certainly have been mistaken. For what angels could he mean, except those whom he has always been accustomed to use as counselors? Among them is the one who of old was a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets to destroy Ahab. If one could do so much there, what will some thousands be able to do here? For this, however, Farnese is justly liable to censure,—in sending to the under benches those who are to preside over the council, and sit higher than its chair. For not even is he himself so great a God, as not to be the servant of the father of lies. Certainly, one who subjects his person and his life to magical divinations, is by acknowledgment less than the devil whom he invokes. Still, I care not what he professes, when I see what it is he does.

(44.) He is a father, and such a father as the poets describe Saturn to have been, one who devours his children. Whoever will not obey what he says, he excludes from the number of the children of God. But it is well that his thunder is Salmonean, not divine.

(45.) The first point here is, that no doctrine shall be received that does not proceed from the tripod of the Roman see. Having obtained this, how can there remain any ground for dispute? Accordingly, he does not object to discussion concerning doctrine, and the purifying and reforming of the church,

provided he sits judge, and the whole controversy is decided by his nod. Not contented, however, with this, he takes another precaution, allowing those things only to be taken into consideration, which he and his cohort of angels choose, prescribing the mode of action, imposing silence as often as he pleases, and whenever his stamp is heard, making all tremble. Is it so? Protestants complain that the worship of God is corrupted, his glory extinguished, or, at least greatly obscured, the kingdom of Christ overturned, religion adulterated, the doctrine of truth partly vitiated, partly buried, the church miserably torn and wasted, the sacraments prostituted to a vile and shameful gain, souls redeemed by the blood of Christ made the subject of a sacrilegious trafficking, and the ministry or pastoral office, than which nothing ought to be more salutary to the world, converted into a deadly tyranny. They charge the Pope and his adherents with the guilt of all these evils, and they are prepared to demonstrate, as with the finger, that he is Antichrist. They decline not, should the proof fail, not only to bear the penalty of calumny, but all punishments, however severe. All that they demand is audience before a fair tribunal, and audience on the condition that the cause be determined according to the sacred word of God, yet without disregarding the ancient customs of the Fathers. What says the most Holy Father to this? He, indeed, allows

cognizance, but on the terms which I have stated. But this is just the same as if a robber, when accused of the robbery and murder committed by him, were to say that he does not refuse to be judged, but on the condition that the tribunal shall be erected by himself, that he from it shall pronounce judgment in his own cause, that nothing shall be advanced against his will, that he shall be pressed by no evidence, but shall so regulate the whole pleading of the cause, that he may without any molestation secure impunity for his crimes. Here we see the reason why Imperial Diets are not competent to hear this cause.

(46.) The second point relates to ecclesiastical revenues, and then the doctrine maintained is, that if hitherto there has been any vice in the administration of them, if any illicit usurpation, it can only be corrected by the judgment of the Pope. Who can doubt that the Pope has reasons for insisting upon this? For what access would be given to Princes to make innovations, were they admitted here? We know what unrestrained luxury prevails in the present day among bishops, abbots, and those who follow in their train. Princes might hear that the wealth which is now so shamefully dilapidated, is the patrimony of the poor, and then who would not rise against these squanderers, did not they anticipate interference by forcing themselves into order? Princes might learn from the ancient canons what the dis-

tribution should be, and to whom it belongs, and they might in consequence insist on restoring the ancient deaconship. They might hear that no man should be supported out of the revenues of the church who does not fulfil his function, and they might therefore proclaim, that all lazy-bellies are to be discarded. Were this done, how few out of the many legions would remain? What bishop in the present day performs his duty, nay, pretends to perform it? What parson does? Hence canons and others might be brought back to the old form of presbytery. Then this profane, that is, as they term it, lay correction, might not only travel to other churches, but might find its way to the hitherto inaccessible see of Rome itself. What else would this be than to confound heaven and earth? Would it not be a criminal indignity to the terrestrial god, that his rule of life should be dictated, that the expense of his table should be prescribed, that his accounts should be annually called for? And not only so, but whatever he has seized from others by unjust violence, or stolen by fraud, might be wrested from him. Nay, more, he might be forced to restore what he pillaged from the empire, and possesses as of right; in short, to disgorge all the rapine which he has engulfed during so many years. Still, if any greater necessity required it, all this might be conceded. But now, why should the Princes invade another's office when so equitable a method is here

prescribed by Farnese? For who is better fitted to effect a cure than he who has a thorough knowledge of the disease? The corruptions which entirely put an end to the ancient deaconship must be cleared out and removed! On whom is it fitter that this office should be imposed, than on those who are not only aware of the evils, but also the authors of them? Let us wait and see what kind of amendment will take place, if free power be left to the priests, either to act or refrain from acting. Not thus good king, Josiah, who charged his scribe not only with the revenue destined for maintenance, but also with the sacred offerings. And yet Farnese is not ashamed to accuse the states of the Empire of sacrilege, if they interfere to check his sacrilege.

(47.) To what the concession made to the Protestants amounts I need not here explain, though in substance it comes to this, that they are not to be prematurely oppressed by unjust prejudices, until their cause has been duly investigated and judged. His holiness orders all this to be rescinded. The thing, at first sight, seems harsh, but there is a reason under. For what if Protestants should come to the council in possession of all their rights? Would not the holy see be injured were discussion to be entered upon as if matters were doubtful? Therefore, it is not without cause the Pope contends so strenuously that they shall not have the benefit of any privilege:

For what more convenient for him, or more expeditious, than that they should be dragged thither, as felons, or pay the penalty of their absence? There can be no doubt, therefore, as to the expediency, but we ask, is it just and right? Farewell honesty, says Farnese, let utility prevail. This, indeed, is the usual course of Roman justice, but he forgets that he is speaking in Germany, where the faith, once pledged, is religiously observed, and there is some sense of shame. In Germany, I say, it is new and unusual to break promises, to resile from solemn obligations, and regard nothing as firmly ratified, except in so far as conducive to self-interest. But, if it is abhorrent from the common custom of Germany to count a promise as nothing, and retract it at pleasure, what more alien to the character of its Emperor?

The conclusion is, that whatever stipulations the Emperor has made with the Protestants, whatever transacted and determined, must be declared null and void. True, among men there is nothing holier than faith; but it was long ago decreed that faith is not to be kept with heretics. But, if an oath has been interposed? As if it did not belong to pontiffs to loose from an oath as often as they see fit! But it is a perpetual and inviolable law of the empire, that what is promised must be performed. What then? Is not the Pope superior to laws? Nay, what are laws to him? But is it not unworthy of

the majesty of the Emperor to abandon his decree? It is enough that all turpitude is wiped away by the sanctity of the Pope. But the deed has been executed. As if the absolution of the Pope did not suffice for nullifying all deeds. Thus, indeed, he was wont to act in former times. Of this we have a signal proof in the case of John Huss, whom the Romans, after alluring him to Constance by a safe-conduct, cruelly murdered. The Emperor Sigismund, a prince of a mild, and by no means a sanguinary temper, was present. When he, thinking it most disgraceful both to himself and the whole empire, that an individual whom he had taken under his power and protection should, in his presence, and so actually under his protection, be hurried off to die by the executioner, earnestly interceded to prevent the barbarous cruelty, the decree was framed by the holy fathers, that faith is not to be kept with heretics. By this the conscience of the Emperor was set free from the oath, while he was ridiculed for his simplicity and bashfulness, in fearing that any disgrace could still accrue to him from violating, or at least neglecting his faith. But we are now in another age. The world, which was then blind, has opened its eyes. In the minds of the Germans there still resides a remembrance of the foul act, warning them to beware of ever again joining themselves as associates in Roman perfidy. More especially, there is an Emperor who will

never be induced to bring his faith and dignity into bondage to Farnese. It is known how oft he has been urged to cruelty by that Satan, and what bellows have been blown to kindle him into flame. He has, however, stood firm to his purpose, and among his many noble and heroic virtues, the one worthiest of all admiration is, that, during these commotions of the empire, he has never allowed himself to be turned aside, either from moderation and clemency, or from a religious regard to his word.

THE END.

JUL 19 1929

